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COMFORT AND CONSOLATION

FOR THE

Sick and Afflicted.

WITH

MASS AND PRAYERS FOR THE SICK
AND FOR THE DEAD.



London:
THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON;
AND DERBY.



PREFACE.

If the utility of a work depends in a great measure on the matter which it contains, who can imagine the good which will be effected by that which is now offered to the faithful?

The thoughts and sentiments which are here expressed will at once edify and sustain the sick, console families afflicted by the death of their members, and convey to the heart those salutary impressions which make us reflect on the nothingness of our present life, and the greatness of our immortal future.

Men of the world are generally forgetful of their souls and their salvation. However, there are occasions in life which recall them to the thought of God, if they wish to profit by them. Such are the afflictions,—alas! too fre-

quent,—which call them to the church, around a coffin at the funeral of a friend or relative, and which cause them to hear, if they listen, the salutary teachings of death. In truth, for all who will reflect on them, these solemn hours, these opportunities, never pass without producing the most happy results. They seem to recall the words of the Holy Ghost: “Think of your last end, and you will never sin.”

It is for the attainment of so desirable a result that we wish to combine, under a convenient form, a collection of meditations, prayers, and short instructions, various and touching, taken from the most esteemed authors, and which seemed to us calculated to produce the liveliest and most salutary impression on the heart.

To attain this end we have divided our little work into four parts. The first contains advice for the sick, and those in charge of them.

The second places before the eyes of the reader the grave teachings of death,

and the consolation which religion and faith alone can impart.

The third, a collection of prayers for the use of the sick, in connection with the object of the work, which is to show how to live in a Christian manner, so as to deserve a holy death.

The fourth part contains the Mass and prayers for the dead.

May this little work, which we place under the protection of Mary Immaculate and her glorious spouse St. Joseph, patron of our book, obtain for all those who read it the supreme grace of a good and holy death. *Moriatur anima mea morte justorem*,—May my soul die the death of the just.

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PART FIRST.

BOOK I.

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CARE OF THE SICK.

CHAPTER I.

THE SICK.

"He was at the point of death."—*John iv. 47.*

The important and essentially practical lessons which are to form the contents of the following chapters, are of such interest that we cannot reflect too much on them. We are about to prepare a series of special instructions on the care of the sick and the means of sanctifying sickness and death; and this, not alone for the sick themselves, but also for persons in charge of them.

Sickness being the forerunner of death, it is proper to commence these instructions by a serious study of that subject. Have you observed the text of this first lesson, *Incipiebat mori*? What words! "At the point of death!" But the child just born is also at the point of death. *Incipiebat mori*: the whole life being but a lingering death, according to St. Gregory.* The apostle expresses the same thought in a striking manner, when he says, "I die daily:" *Quotidie morior*. (1 Cor. xv. 31.) It is therefore a long time that you have been at the point of death. Are you not approaching the end? Properly speaking, sickness is but a warning, a sign, that we may approach the end well. Learn, then, to begin well from this day, that you may end well. It is precisely that which should be our principal study,—the Science of a Good Death.

For this end we will give some very simple rules of conduct, which will

• *Quædam prolixitas mortis.*

answer for every one; they come under two heads:

1st. What sick persons should do in order to profit by their sickness and sanctify it, by deriving from it the fruits and blessings which God never fails to grant to those who bear and suffer in a Christian manner.

2nd. Of the manner in which persons called upon to take charge of the sick, should act.

I.—DIRECTIONS FOR THE SICK.

1st. In the first place you should be careful to avoid murmuring, remembering that sickness is a gift of God, as well as health. You may, however, pray to God to take away from you that bitter chalice, saying with Jesus Christ: "Let this chalice pass from me;" (Matt. xxvi. 39,) but do not fail to add, like Him: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Then you must avoid despondency, weariness, impatience, above all, despair; it is a time of trial and temptation; the enemy of souls is

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there, at the bed of suffering, seeking to kill souls by sadness, and to ruin them by despair; resist him vigorously by faith; and to triumph the more easily over his efforts, "go against him," as St. Ignatius tells us, *Oportet ire contra*; that is to say, inspire your soul with confidence and joy, by pious hymns, by the sight of the pure heavens, or the flowers of the earth—remembering that, if sadness kills, hope is the very life! *Spe vivit homo*; and to avoid all these dangers and faults, you must take the means which we point out.

2nd. Pray, without struggling, without effort; in fine, without scruple. But by a look, a sigh, a word from the heart; a glance towards Heaven or the cross; an act of contrition or of love; above all, of submission: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Or you can read pious works, a little at a time, but in choice books, oftenest in the Bible, in the Passion of Jesus Christ; some versicles of the Psalms, the Imitation of Christ, or the life of some

saint. I would also advise you, even for the sake of your health, as well as for that of your salvation, to settle your affairs promptly, if you have not done so before you are taken sick; the peace, the calm, which result from the accomplishment of this duty will always cause a healthful reaction. I have seen persons who have been cured from the moment they had done so.

But if this is true as to the arrangement of your temporal affairs, what shall we say as to the efficacy of the Sacraments in regard to both your health and your salvation? That they contribute powerfully to both one and the other, is not only a fact proved by experience, but a truth of faith. I therefore entreat you to receive no more than three visits from your physician, without calling in the father of your soul; and in many cases it would be better to conform to the custom in truly Catholic countries, of not calling in the doctor until you have seen the priest. Then obey them both strictly.

II.—OF THE MANNER IN WHICH PERSONS, CALLED UPON TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE SICK, SHOULD ACT.

If you are called upon to be with the sick, it is evident that many things which have been said for them, can be applied to you. But, following the method of St. Thomas Aquinas, I will first say in a few words:

1st. That you must avoid impatience, disgust, useless uneasiness, the eagerness of an indiscreet zeal: it is thus, above all, that patience surely reaches the goal of perfection itself: "And patience hath a perfect work." (James i. 4.) If you should be obliged to speak when near the sick, let it be in a low voice, in few words, and always of useful and agreeable things: beware of fatiguing or, still more, of provoking them. Nothing annoys sick people more than to speak before them in such a manner that they cannot hear what is said; they imagine that you are speaking of them, and of the dangerous con-

dition in which they are. If there be real danger, avoid speaking of it, even in a low tone, for they often hear much better than you suppose, and it troubles, agitates, and discourages them.

2nd. How to act.—Your charity, faith, and love will not fail to point out whatever is necessary to be done. Let us, however, give a little advice. You must carefully see that the most perfect cleanliness exists in the room and around the sick person, that there be order and silence, that the prescriptions and advice of the physician be exactly observed; anticipate the desires of the sick, and endeavour, in every way you can, to ease their sufferings; pray, read, as has been said above; lead the sick person gently and carefully to desire and ask for the aids of religion, in good time. What shall I say? in a word, Love! Suffer with him who suffers—"Who is weak and I am not weak?" (Cor. xi. 20)—and all will be well. Behold a mother beside her child: faith tells you, it is Jesus Christ. Yes, it is He: *In-*

firmus eram, et visitastis me: "I was sick and you visited Me." (Matt. xxvi. 36.) He will remember it at the last day.

CHAPTER II.

THE DYING.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."
Apoc. xiv. 13.

We have given an instruction, and some practical rules, as to the manner of acting in sickness when with those who are dangerously ill. Now we shall speak of those whose last hour has come, who are dying, of those who struggle in that supreme moment and who are on the threshold of eternity; in a word, of the agonizing, and this word expresses all: it is the last struggle, the decisive contest. Ah! the world is an immense battle-field, and when we think that every day there are more than eighty thousand struck down by Death; more

than three thousand every hour who fall in the battle; who will not be touched with compassion? But, above all, who can refrain from tears when they consider that great army, and reflect that, among so many victims, there are but few good deaths? The object of this lesson is to teach:

1st. How we can aid those who are dying at a distance from us:

2nd. How we should aid those whom we are near. An important subject for the salvation of many souls.

I.—In the first place, how can we assist those who are dying at a distance from us? There are so many, and we do not think of them. I have seen persons dying in the most fearful agony; and in the same house, on the same floor, or just above—shall I say it?—there was dancing! The cries of pain, the groans of agony, the death-rattle, were mingled with the sound of merry music.

In some countries there are pious confraternities instituted for the dying, and at all hours of the day and night the

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brethren appointed pray at the foot of the altar and pass whole hours in holy vigils, begging of God victory for those of their brethren who, at the moment of death, are struggling with the powers of hell.

To make this lesson still more practical, and to show you how to give effectual aid to these souls, here is what I would advise. Every year, in the first days of January, offer a fervent communion for all who may die during the year; every month, hear a Mass piously, for all those who may die during that month; every week, recite, for the same intention, the sublime prayers for the dying; and every day, or at night before going to sleep, say a *Hail Mary* for all who may die during that night; and I promise you that your charity will be blessed, and that you will have more than one angel to protect you at the hour of death.

II.—How can we assist those whom we are near when they are dying? They are relations or friends; we must love

them till death, be faithful to them for eternity.

1st. Avoid that false tenderness, and those exaggerated fears which would keep away all thought of danger. Would it not be cruelty, if it went so far as to deprive these dear souls of the great aids of religion, as we shall explain in the next lesson?—Avoid those too eager, too often repeated proofs of a tender but demonstrative love, which might disturb a soul so near God, and distract it from what should alone occupy it. Rather make him kiss the cross or the statue of Mary. Avoid, also, that imprudent praise which exposes him to the temptation of pride. . . . Ah ! you speak of his virtues, of his good works ! . . . Hush, I entreat you ! the devil has already recalled them for his ruin ; you are entering into the perfidious views of that cruel enemy ; rather lead that soul to the remembrance of the divine mercy to console him, and the hope of the Cross to fortify him.—Avoid, above all, in that moment, complaints, groans,

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even tears if you can; do not weary this dear one by speaking of money matters, and many other things unsuited to his condition.

2nd. I suppose, without doubt, that the great helps of religion have been administered in time; if not, bring a priest without delay, and prepare the sick man gently for this visit, which will do him so much good. But after Extreme Unction, and at the hour of death, try to have with him as much as possible, until the end, a Sister of Charity, or some person of well known piety. The presence of such persons, their prayers, their words, encourage, fortify, console. If you cannot have such a favour, supply it by praying yourself, repeating from time to time some words from the Holy Scriptures, which inspire sentiments of humility, contrition, submission, confidence, and love. From time to time pronounce, and make the sick person pronounce, the names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: make him kiss the cross, try to have him make

the sign of the cross, and even with holy water.

There are special graces and indulgences attached to these pious practices. You can also repeat the beautiful prayers for the dying, but in a low voice, so as not to weary the sick person, who would sometimes wish to answer and might thus fatigue himself too much.

Finally, you must pray as long as the struggle lasts; pray till the end, to assure the victory, and unite that soul with Jesus Christ in His sufferings, His agony, and death.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAST SACRAMENTS.

"I am the Bread of Life."—*John vi. 48.*

I am now approaching a subject, the gravest and most serious which can find a place in this book. It is a most important and necessary lesson, and cer-

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tainly it is that which most directly concerns the glory of God and the salvation of souls. It treats of the last Sacraments, which give strength and consolation to the dying; which assure us of life, even at the hour of death. *Ego sum panis vitæ*: "I am the Bread of Life." Can we believe that there are, in Christian and Catholic countries, persons so misguided as to presume to imagine that there is danger in alarming the sick person by speaking to him of the necessity of calling in a priest? As if the sight of a priest necessarily announced or could cause death!

I.—I say that there is every hope of the salvation of those who receive in time the august Sacraments of the Viaticum and Extreme Unction.

II.—That there is much to be feared for those who do not receive them, or who receive them too late. In a word, these divine Sacraments are the great consolation of the dying, as well as of those who assist at the death-bed.

First: Those who receive them in

time, and with good dispositions, will certainly obtain life; they will die in peace and love. This grace is secured to them :

1st. By a good confession, made with clearness, with sincerity, and with contrition. Then delusion is no longer possible, there are no longer any ties which retain the soul in sin; all is broken, they feel God so near them. The first absolution is full of sweetness, but the last is yet more consoling, and the heart breathes freely and in peace.

Second : But it is especially strength, the fruit of Extreme Unction, and love, the fruit of Communion as a Viaticum, which secure the happiness of this faithful soul. Thus fortified for the last contest, it can defy all the powers of hell; and its hope, uplifted by the visit and the possession of Jesus Christ its Saviour, makes it feel in its joy a foretaste of heaven: it loves too much to fear Him who awaits and calls it, its Saviour Jesus! the same God who has given Himself to it, and who lies within

it. Oh, courage and confidence, child of God, good and faithful servant! you suffer, but every thing consoles and reassures you: the prayers of the Church, so touching at this time; the words of the priest, the father of your soul; and the sight of the cross! That happy calm, the soul's sweet joy, often causes a powerful reaction which restores health and life: we have many examples of this kind. Oh! if the time is come, the last hour arrived, you will leave the earth without regret,—you will fall asleep calmly in the peace of God, and you will ascend to heaven, smiling at your brethren and friends, who are consoled by this sight of the death of the just.

III.—But if these powerful aids of religion are not received in time—what danger for those who die, what responsibility for those who are left, for those who mourn! And, indeed, if a priest be not called in, it could only be, as regards the sick person, by his unbelief, indifference, etc., human respect, or

culpable negligence, or by his ignorance of the state in which he is. Let us not speak of those unbelievers, those indifferentists, those cowardly and senseless slaves, unworthy soldiers of Jesus Christ. Let us rather speak of those who delay to call in a priest through negligence, or because they do not think themselves in danger. And we may here remark, that this is not the fault of the sick persons, but of their relatives and friends, who, through a false kindness, and the foolish wisdom of the world, are afraid to warn and prepare them for this final grace. Now it is precisely against this false tenderness and foolish wisdom of the world, that I wish to protest in the strongest and most emphatic terms. Yes, there are parents who know not how to love their children. There are children who know not how to love their father, their mother. They hasten to call in a physician for the temporal life, for the health of the body; and not only do they not think of bringing a priest for

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the soul and for the eternal life, but they do all they can to deceive the poor sick person. They repeat, like the serpent to our first parents, "You shall not die." (Gen. iii. 4.) It is nothing, there is no danger, in a few days you will be well. Undoubtedly they should use precaution in speaking to the sick, not to alarm them; but to deceive them thus is the greatest cruelty. They say, indeed, that they do not wish them to die without the Sacraments, that they will send for a priest late. But, alas! often it is too late; the dying person cannot recognize the priest, he can no longer hear; he does not know what they say or do. The distressed priest consoles the afflicted friends as best he can; he tells them that the dying person kissed the cross, that he wept. But how different it is when the dying person has received all the graces of the Holy Viaticum, and has been truly strengthened by the Sacraments of the Church.

We will conclude this lesson by in-

viting all the faithful to meditate on this subject, to make mutual promises of warning each other in case of sickness, to watch, to foresee, that all may receive with faith these supreme graces, that they may imitate the fervour and love of a pious Christian who, on the day when he was to receive the great sacrament of life, told his grandchildren to gather all the flowers in the garden, and to throw them where the priest was to pass, even on the stairs and around his death-bed. "It is Corpus Christi," said he, smiling; "my children, God is coming; go and find flowers, scatter them everywhere, flowers! flowers!" And some hours after this sweet festival, he died in the peace of the Lord, amid his blessed flowers and his little angels.

COMMUNION OF THE SICK.

Directions.—The sick chamber should be made neat and tidy; a table, prepared and covered with a clean linen cloth, whereon the Blessed Sacrament

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may be meetly laid ; two lighted wax candles and a crucifix placed on the table ; a vessel containing holy water, with a sprinkler ; and a small glass vessel containing common water for the purification of the priest's fingers ; also a clean linen cloth is to be placed on the breast of the person about to communicate.

ADMINISTRATION OF EXTREME UNCTION.

Directions.—The feet and hands of the sick person should be carefully washed ; a table, covered with a white cloth, should be prepared, with a jug of water, basin, and towel, for washing the priest's hands ; also a lighted wax candle, crucifix, and holy water, with a sprinkler.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DEAD.—I. THE BODY.

“And every one that believeth in Me shall not die for ever.”—*John xi. 26.*

The resurrection of the body is an article of the Christian faith. The Church, whose faith is assured, and whose hope is certain, goes so far as to give the dead the incense which is due only to God, and to objects consecrated to God: supposing that the dead died in the friendship of God,—which is what we must always suppose without proof to the contrary,—she considers their remains as holy, having been consecrated to God by Baptism, and their whole person sanctified by the Sacraments.

Having pointed out the way in which we should act when near the sick and dying, we will now, in two special lessons, consider how we should conduct

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ourselves in regard to the dead. At present we will only speak of the body, and in the following lesson of the soul of the dear departed.

I. BEFORE THE BURIAL.—When the dying person has drawn his last breath, weeping and lamenting should, as far as possible, be avoided through respect for death itself, and the judgment of God which is so near at hand: *Dominus enim prope est*—"The Lord is nigh." (Phil. iv. 5.) Every one should bow down and pray in silence. A person assisting should close the eyes and lips: *stipendia peccati mors*: "For the wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.) A cross should be placed on the heart; holy water, with the blessed candles burning, at the feet of the stiff and motionless corpse. For at least an hour no one should occupy themselves with what is called the laying out, so that the peace, the calm,—shall I say, the majesty—of eternal rest, should not be disturbed. This religious duty should be accomplished in silence, these sacred

remains should be handled respectfully, and from the moment that these duties have been performed, and when the corpse has been replaced in the bed, there should be always a cross, two tapers, blessed palm, holy water, and at least one person praying beside it.

II.—THE BURIAL. This is one of the seven corporal works of mercy, an act eminently religious. Tobias was praised by the Holy Ghost for having performed this duty for the poor. There was a time in the Church when this was a privilege reserved for religious orders; Christian mothers did not wish to confide this care to others; they themselves had the courage to bury their children. We recommend here again, silence, recollection, veneration for the corpse,—temple of the Divinity. You can meditate calmly on eternity; recall some sentences of Scripture, or of the Doctors, on the dead; or the grave reflections of Bossuet, who finds, in the shroud which is used for the burial, an image of the swaddling cloths in which

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children are wrapped ; and in the grave itself, a resemblance to the cradle. Therefore it is beautiful to see a mother lay her child to rest in the cradle of immortality.

III.—THE FUNERAL.—Propriety must assuredly be observed ; every thing according to fortune and position : but nothing beyond that. A demonstrative and empty sorrow should be avoided, an excessive and ostentatious grief, a vain and superstitious grief. An *empty* sorrow,—that which goes no farther than the earth, which does not follow the dear one with prayer and almsgiving. *Excessive*, — without hope, which screams and makes other outward manifestations. Let it be well understood that great sorrow is silent and motionless, often without tears.—*Superstitious*,—that which abandons itself to vain fears ; which believes in mournful dreams and gloomy thoughts. Let your mourning be fitting, your grief calm ; let faith and hope be the rule, even in those days of sorrow.

Finally, you should never fail to salute with faith and reverence when you pass before a corpse.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEAD.—II. THE SOUL.

"Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends." *Job xix. 21.*

We will now speak of the sacred duty of praying for the dead. The voice, the lamentations of well beloved souls, cannot be heard by us. I will try and plead their cause, and I hope to touch some hearts. This lesson will be composed of three considerations :—

1st. We can aid the suffering souls.

2nd. We should do so.

3rd. Means of aiding them.

I.—We can deliver souls who suffer in purgatory, by our prayers and tears ; it is a truth of faith, a holy and sublime truth, besides being perfectly conform-

able to reason. But, for us, there is no question of proving this sacred doctrine, we must only recall it; and for this, it suffices to quote the words of the Holy Council of Trent: *Negaverit purgatorium esse . . . animasque ibi detentas, fidelium suffragiis posse servari . . . sit anathema!* . . . “If any one dares to deny that there is a purgatory . . . and that the souls of those detained there can be relieved by the prayers of the faithful, . . . let him be anathema!” Ah! I can readily understand that pride might incite the mind to reject this beautiful belief in purgatory; but I cannot conceive and would deeply compassionate the heart, a mother’s heart above all, which could refuse to admit this dogma, and to pray for those she loves.

II.—We should exert ourselves to relieve and deliver these souls; our heart tells us so, they are our brethren. It suffices that we may be touched by their sufferings, for us to remember two things: 1st, What they suffer in that place of expiation; and 2nd, Who they

are that implore our compassion. Of what they suffer in purgatory, the holy doctors give us frightful accounts, terrible pictures. They suffer there, in one sense, as they do in hell; that is to say, their torments bear some resemblance to those of hell itself. They say, with St. Catherine, that it is an avenging fire similar to that of hell; only that it is not eternal. They suffer there from being deprived of heaven from which they are yet distant; and this privation, this exile, which does not exclude hope, it is true, is, however, horrible torture for those souls who have seen God and who love Him.

2nd. But who are these souls, these unhappy pictures of divine justice? Ah! they are our brethren, our friends. It is, perhaps, your child; or it is your father, ungrateful son; your mother, unnatural daughter; and it is, perhaps, for having loved you too well that they now suffer so cruelly: and you think no more of them when they have entered the land of forgetfulness, *in terra obli-*

vionis (Psalm lxxxvii. 13); you cast them aside, and it is in vain that they cry from the devouring flames, and you could extinguish these so easily: *Misere-mini*—"Have pity on me."

III.—How can we relieve and deliver these souls? This is, for us, the principal and practical question. There are five efficacious means:—

1st. PRAYER.—It is here that we can especially recall the words of St. Augustine: *Deus vult orari, vult cogi*. God wills that we pray, that we may appease His justice, that we disarm His wrath, and that we in some sort do violence to Him. These souls are so dear to Him, He complains of being obliged to treat them with severity. You should then pray with the Church; you should love to repeat her hymns of sorrow and of hope, the *De Profundis*, the *Dies iræ*, &c. But you will not pray alone.

2nd. THE HOLY SACRIFICE.—You should ask the powerful prayers of the priests of God, the prayers of Jesus Christ Himself, who is offered up by

their hands on the altar. This sacrifice, above all, says the holy Council of Trent, opens the gates of purgatory; the blood of the Lamb extinguishes those atoning flames. St. John Chrysostom saw an angel pouring blood from a chalice on the abyss, and the purified souls winging their flight to heaven.

3rd. PENANCE.—Admirable design of the divine mercy! a tear suffices to appease God; the slightest mortification satisfies His eternal justice. The balance is in the hands of the Lord. There is yet an enormous weight of suffering for expiation; you shed one tear, the soul is delivered, it ascends to Heaven and blesses you: *Miseremini*—"Have pity on me."

4th. AIMS.—Ah! charity, above all, is powerful; it redeems all sins, and covers all iniquities. Jesus Christ is grateful, it is to Him that we give when we take pity on the poor; He hears their prayers and wishes, for the poor pray for you on earth and even in heaven. *Iste pauper clamavit, et Domi-*

nus exaudivit eum: "This poor man cried; and the Lord heard him." (Psalm xxx. 7.) *Date eleemosynam*, "Give alms." (Luke xi. 41.) Give alms, then, above all in a time of mourning, give a little of that money which your father or mother has left you, and you will extinguish the devouring flames. *Misere-mini*—"Have pity then on them!"

5th. INDULGENCES.—These are an immense treasure upon which you can draw to pay the debt which these souls have contracted with God. Ah! do not lose the chance which is offered you. And what? If your father while on earth had been immured in a horrible prison, and if, to restore him to liberty, it would suffice to pay some money to a severe creditor,—would you not make an effort to deliver him? And now, when the soul of your father or mother languishes in the prison of God's justice, and is a prey to the most poignant sufferings, in the midst of avenging flames, now when it would be so easy for you to open the door of his prison,—what

do I say? even the door of light, the gate of Heaven,—by applying to this suffering soul the grace and merit of your indulgences, will you not think of it, will you let him languish in exile, and suffer in fire? Ah! this would be too cruel, too ungrateful! *Miseremini saltem vos!* Have pity on me, at least you, my friends. Have pity on these poor souls, at least you who loved them once; and one day they will pray for you.

Recite the *De profundis* piously and fervently.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GRAVE.

“Only the grave remaineth for us.”—*Job xvii. 1.*

There, in truth, is the end of the journey, the end of all glory. A grave! And that we think so little of it, is one of the greatest misfortunes of life. To question the grave, will certainly be

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one of the most useful and important lessons of this religious course; it is the subject of a most important meditation. Apply your mind seriously, and profit by all the holy thoughts which are about to be presented to your hearts.

I.—In the first place, a general reflection: Is it not very remarkable that everywhere, and in all ages, so much veneration for the grave has been observed? It is a real homage, a universal homage, a homage of love and of tears. The patriarchs built themselves nothing on earth but their tombs, those last dwelling-places where they were, indeed, to remain longer than life; during life, which they called a pilgrimage, they contented themselves with a tent. Even the barbarians and savages thought more of the ashes of their fathers than of aught else they possessed, and I like these words of the Scythians to Alexander: "Let us only carry with us the tombs of our ancestors, and do with the land whatever thou wilt." This was their treasure. And who

does not see in this sacred testimony, in this veneration of graves, a sublime proof of the faith of all in immortality, a magnificent hope of resurrection?

II. But let us further explain this idea of the grave. We can judge a religion, a people, a city, a family, at the first sight of its graves. *Veni et vide*: "Come and see." (John xi. 31.) Let us first see what is a profane grave; and then see what is a Christian, a glorious grave.

1st. A PROFANE WORLDLY GRAVE is truly sad; and there are but too many such, where nothing reminds us of God, not even a cross. No word of hope in heaven: nothing but vain words, ridiculous eulogies: good father, good husband, good son, figures weeping, the statue of Time with his scythe, birds of night, broken columns, empty urns, tears falling on the marble! Oh, pitiable sight! how I compassionate children who see nothing else on the tomb of a father or a mother! how I pity these poor families, and there are many such nowadays!

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Oh, a cross, at least a cross, that my tears may not fall without hope!

2nd. A CHRISTIAN GRAVE.—There, at least, there is hope, prayer, and consolation: the tree of life, the cross predominates, and sometimes the image of the Virgin Mary, mother of sorrows; and what words of faith and love may we not read on the stone, what touching wishes, what sublime prayers! “*Requiescat in pace;*”—“*De profundis;*”—“*Miseremini mei.*”*

3rd. A GLORIOUS GRAVE.—Properly speaking, there is none such but the grave of the living Christ,—“And His sepulchre shall be glorious,” (Isaias xi. 10,)—and that of His Mother. Jesus rose from the grave by His own power; and Mary was raised by Him to life, and was carried up to heaven on the wings of angels. But yet there are some other glorious graves on earth,—those of the saints, the friends of God. We pray at these graves, because we know

* “May he rest in peace.” “Out of the depths,” etc. “Have pity on me,” etc.

that often there escapes from them a miraculous power, which saves souls, or cures the sick, or even raises the dead. Thus, in Paris, the grave of a humble little shepherdess, Geneviève of Nanterre, is assuredly more glorious than those of kings and emperors, or the superb mausoleums of all the Egyptian Pharaohs, those lofty pyramids, the most ostentatious monuments of human pride; for they can expect nothing; they do not pray. What do I say? Even the name of him who rotted in the most beautiful of these famous pyramids is unknown. In conclusion, let your tomb be Christian, so that all can pray there for you. Let there be, at least, a cross.

DEATH.—Our Lord, at the time of the raising of the daughter of Jairus to life, gave to death the name of sleep. Consoling expression! well fitted to assure our hopes. After sleep comes the awakening, and what is death but a long sleep? When we are dead, you will say, we cannot speak, nor see, nor

hear, we cannot feel anything. But neither can we when we sleep. During sleep the soul sleeps, as it were; in death it awakes. The body, when stricken by death, decays; it dissolves, and becomes ashes and dust. What do you conclude from this? Why, even this should make us joyful. When we wish to rebuild a house which has fallen into decay, we commence by sending out the inmates, then we demolish it that we may construct it again, finer than it was before; and those who leave it, far from sorrowing, rejoice, because their thoughts do not dwell on its destruction, but take in beforehand the new building which shall arise from its ruins. In such a manner does God act. He destroys the life of the body, and takes to Himself the immortal soul which dwelt within it; but at His own appointed time He will bestow on the body an immortal life, and will re-unite it to the purified and glorified soul.

We will use another similitude. If you see a bronze statue, which rust

and decay has defaced, mutilated even in many of its parts, melted down with the intention of restoring its perfection, you would not think that it was lost because destroyed for a time, but you would, on the contrary, think that it had gained by the change which would give it a new being. Therefore, at the sight of a body stricken by death, which dissolves it, do not look only at the spectacle which meets your eyes, but await the recasting. Still, even this comparison is incomplete. Do not stop at these simple comparisons; for the statuary, in recasting his work, does not make it of a different or more durable metal than the first. But of this body of clay, condemned to death, God will make a new body, pure and immortal; the earth, which has received into its bosom this corruptible and perishable substance, will some time yield it again unaltered. Therefore, do not consider only the corpse, stretched lifeless and motionless; but from those ruins behold a new man come forth, who

will awake to an all-glorious existence, to a life so beautiful that all the efforts of our imagination can give us no idea of it. Let your mind be transported from the object before your eyes to a bright hereafter.

You say that you cannot be consoled for the loss of the dead. Is your despair reasonable? When you give your daughter in marriage to a husband who will take her to a distant country, where she will enjoy a brilliant destiny, you do not regard her absence as a misfortune, and your grief is soon calmed by the thought of the happiness which awaits her elsewhere. Well, in this case it is not a man, your fellow-creature, who imposes this separation upon you; it is the Lord who ordains it, who only takes back what belongs to Himself, that He may transform and enrich it beyond measure. And yet you abandon yourself to inconsolable grief!

Ah! force yourself rather to do the will of God here below, so as to meet again in a better world all that you have

loved on earth. God and these souls await you.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

Let us hear the "Angel of the Schools," St. Thomas, on the state of the body after the resurrection.

THE HAPPINESS OF THE BODY.

The bodies of the blessed are invested with four qualities, which place them at the highest point of excellence that it is possible to attain. The first of these qualities is *Immortality*, which also includes *Impassibility*, in virtue of which these bodies can neither be hurt nor fatigued, nor can they die. If they pass through fire they will not be burnt by it, and if they pass through ice the cold will have no effect upon them, because they are impassible and immortal. The second is *Clearness*, which makes them more brilliant than crystal illuminated by the rays of the sun. "Then shall the just shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 43.)

Therefore all parts of the body shall appear in their living colour, the result of which shall be a glorious beauty which will cause all to admire the wisdom of the Creator in their composition and management. They also have *Agility*, which is the power of transporting themselves with incredible swiftness from one place to another, however distant it may be, without trouble or fatigue. They have, finally, *Subtilty*, which makes them pass through solid bodies without difficulty, just as the rays of the sun can penetrate glass.

The soul, finding itself united to so beautiful and perfect a body, has nothing to complain of, as in this life, because in that state it does not impede any of its spiritual functions, nor its movements, as transporting itself wherever it wishes. On the contrary, it experiences great happiness in this union, which causes it a joy that even the angels do not feel; all this on account of the light of glory, and of the satisfaction of all its various senses, which are satiated with their

respective pleasures, all being pure and conformable to their glorious state; for the eyes contemplate the most admirable objects,—*the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and all the Saints*; consequently, the members of our own family, and all the other beauties [of paradise. The *hearing* is ravished by the perpetual concert of the angels, celebrating the divine praises; therefore, if the music of men is sometimes so charming, and if the voice of the nightingale gives so much pleasure on earth, what delights do not the blessed enjoy in heaven? The *smell* will also be satisfied, for the bodies of the saints give forth a perfume sweeter than the lily, in imitation of Jesus Christ, of whom St. Denis says, “We are persuaded that Jesus, the God-prince, sheds around the sweetest perfume.” (De Eccles. Hierar., iv.) The *taste* will also be gratified, although they neither eat nor drink in heaven, because God will infuse into these blessed bodies some very sweet substance, which will

always continue fresh, and from which a delicious taste will come to the palate and tongue, filling them with sweetness. The *touch* will also have pleasure, as well by touching the celestial body, as by the sweetness and the temperature of the air, and by the feeling of the perfect constitution of the body. In a word, there will be nothing repugnant or offensive to the senses. If to all these things we add the sweetness of their occupation, we shall understand that there is not, and cannot be on earth, a state so complete; for the saints will be no longer occupied by the toils of this life, in providing for their necessities, nor by the rigours of penance in expiating their sins, nor by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in assisting the indigent. What they have to do will be to serve, by solemn offices, the God who has loaded them with so many favours. However, they will converse very sweetly with each other, loving each other cordially, much as a tender mother loves her child, and will

rejoice at each other's happiness. They can transport themselves where they wish in that abode of delight, where "night shall be no more," "nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more;" (Apoc.) and where their every wish shall be gratified.

THE HAPPINESS OF THE SOUL.

As for the soul, it is filled with the sanctifying, consummate, and complete grace, which renders it beautiful and agreeable to all eyes that look upon it. This consummate grace is glory itself, the splendour of the soul, and the source of all its goods and advantages. And, firstly, those that are in the understanding, which is encircled, strengthened, and elevated by the light of glory, which is ravished by the bright and intuitive vision of the divine essence, and all its infinite perfections,—besides, the understanding clearly knows all that the soul can reasonably wish to know, whether it be of the state of the other blessed, men or angels, or the secrets of

nature, and the marvellous workings of Divine Providence. And all its knowledge is without error or uncertainty, and with infallible judgment; for error is an imperfection of the mind, which cannot find place in a state of perfection like that of the blessed: then, if they had doubts or erroneous judgments, they might without any malice form contrary opinions, and might deceive each other, which is a thing repugnant to their perfect society. Through the power of vision which is in the understanding, the will is ravished and carried by a necessary result to acts of beatific love; for an entirely amiable and charming object being presented to the will, which meets besides with no obstacle nor hindrance in loving it, necessarily inclines to that love, so that it is impossible for the will to resist the attraction. Besides being filled with the charity which it had in this case, and that charity not being distracted by earthly occupations, nor burdened by the weight of a feeble and mortal body,

and its object appearing without veil or obscurity, it produces acts of love more excellent than all it could do here below. These acts regard God first in Himself, and are unspeakable delights and favours; they also regard creatures in God, and as goods of God and His property. It is therefore like him who, loving the Father much, loves His children proportionately. It is the same with the blessed who love God as their most amiable Father, and all their brethren as His children, and the rest of the world as creatures and things belonging to Him. Now, this love gives rise to joy in the will, and even the principal act of love is the delight and joy with which they are, as it were, overflowed and filled. And more, their joy is double, because they have part in the felicity of God, and their own felicity. They have the joy of God, of Him who is so happy and so perfect in His Supreme Being; and they have their own joy, being themselves happy and perfect.

(St. Thom. *Theol. affective. De l'état des bienheureux.*)

FAREWELL—ADIEU.*

This is the supreme word of life; it is the last word addressed to us by those who are going to await us in heaven.

Yes, when the fatal bourne is reached, all the illusions of life fail in presence of death, and we must bid an eternal farewell to all around us, to all that we love. Adieu! Ah! have you ever reflected, oh, you who read these lines, have you ever reflected on that word, on its hidden mysterious meaning? It must be admitted that there is nothing more impressive than an adieu, for an adieu is death; an adieu is, perhaps, an eternal separation; this word tells us, at least, that we shall only meet again in the presence of God. But we are so light, we reflect so little, that we pronounce it every day without paying any attention to it. A person once said: "I can

* *Adieu*, a word taken from the French, means "to God."

make all sacrifices, impose on myself every privation, but I cannot say adieu." Ah, in truth, for a loving heart, for a mother's heart especially, this word is like a dagger stroke; it kills when it is deeply felt.

Adieu! The unfortunate, condemned to exile, casts a last look on the shore which is soon to disappear from his sight; he bids it farewell, but he hopes that this farewell will not be for ever; and the hope which he bears in the depths of his heart, the thought that he will again behold his country, the cradle of his childhood, makes the separation from parents and friends less painful. But in the solemn farewell of death the soul is wrung with such anguish that no other sorrow can be compared to it. Ah! are there any among us readers who have lost a father or mother? Do they remember those terrible moments of anguish, of desolation, when, bending over the bed, where all that they held dear was dying, questioning those features soon to decay, counting one by

one the last pulsations of life, trying to keep the last frail threads of existence from snapping asunder, and disputing with horrible death the last powers of nature? And yet we were compelled to separate for ever from that cherished being. My son, my daughter, farewell! Terrible words, which are never forgotten, and which even, after the lapse of years, still sound in our ears like a funeral knell to pierce the heart.

Farewell! Ah! we must say it, not only to all that we hold most dear, but even to our sweetest memories. With what a charm, nevertheless, do we look on anything that belonged to one loved; how carefully does a wife, a mother, conceal from profane eyes all that has been used by a husband who was the happiness of her life, all that belonged to a beloved son or daughter!

There is over all that was used by a person whom we mourn, I know not what sombre tinge, which recalls their memory. Besides, that person had so many ways which remind us of his pres-

ence,—his walk, his voice, the arrangement of his room. Listen at the door of a study; the slightest noise made therein tells you that a well-known person is there, two paces from you. But let death once come,—wait until the hired hands have removed away the lifeless body,—then listen once more. Is it not true that an icy chill runs then through every limb, that death seems to have placed his seal on all that surrounds you? Nothing more! A gloomy and solemn silence has succeeded to the former bustle. O man! had you reflected on this farewell of death, on this separation, which breaks asunder every earthly tie? The heart of man is so loving, its origin so divine, that it is impossible not to see that death is a punishment, and that this horrible separation is **not** the work of God, but of sin. Hence, to console ourselves, let us consider that each of us, after having paid this debt to the justice of God, will meet again in heaven those from whom he has been so cruelly separated on earth.

H O P E .

THE HOPE OF MEETING AGAIN IN HEAVEN IS
THE SUPPORT OF ALL THOSE WHO SUFFER.

Ask the true believer, What is hope? He will answer, For me it is the image of a smiling prospect, which charms the sight, rejoices the heart, raises the soul to the Creator, sustains the strength, renews the courage, and gives consolation to misfortune. For me the past is dead; the present is but a painful dream, soon to vanish; the future alone is something,—the future is my hope.

A hope! O mortal! this is your greatness! In the midst of a world of destruction, in presence of death and forgetfulness, when all around you passes away, when you see those you love disappear in turn, you hope to be with them again in a life which is never to end; the word eternity does not astonish your soul, for the soul has the idea of the infinite. This sublime sentiment

detaches us from the earth, and transports us to the bosom of God.

Hope is the support of our will; it ever places a goal before our efforts, consoles us in misfortune, and encourages us in success. All men, each in the path marked out for him by Providence, walk in the light of that lamp. Thanks to this consoling sentiment, which always promises us a more prosperous tomorrow, we bear the evils, the trials of our present life, which are sometimes so bitter that we are tempted to give up in despair; but hope is before us with outstretched hand, promising us happiness, and we seize it with joy.

Besides, the Christian who does not deceive himself as to the destiny of man, and who places his hope higher than earth, accepts the miseries here below as a chalice of expiation; he knows that God will reward him in supreme felicity for his sorrows and sufferings here below, and he rejoices in having to suffer. How sublime, then, is the hope which thus produces resignation, re-

presses every murmur, disposes the heart to sacrifices of every kind, and sheds over the evils of fleeting time the balm of eternal consolation. What other remedy than hope has the pious Christian soul? What a balm is hope to the poor mother who has lost all the joys of her soul by the death of a beloved child. How it softens the woes of life, how it moderates sorrow, and enables us to endure it! Yes, hope is the fairest gift that a God, full of love, has given to His creatures; it is the invisible angel sent on earth that the troubled soul may rest and rejoice in the life to come, forgetting the miseries of the present. It is these consoling promises which soothe our existence; the hope of happiness is almost happiness itself.

“Hope,” says Chateaubriand, “is endowed with a special character; it is that which places it in connection with our miseries. Doubtless, that religion which makes hope a virtue was revealed by heaven. That nurse of the unfortunate, placed near man, like a mother

by her sick child, cradles him in her arms, and soothes away his sorrows; she watches by his solitary pillow, she sings him to sleep with magic songs. It is not surprising to see hope, which is so sweet to cherish, and which seems a natural emotion of the soul, transformed for the Christian into a virtue strictly required; so that, whatever he does he is obliged to drink copiously from that enchanted cup, wherewith so many of the wretched would esteem themselves happy in moistening their lips for a moment. Yet more, (and this is the wonder,) *man will be rewarded for having hoped*, in other words, *for having made his own happiness*. The faithful soul, always militant in life, always struggling with the enemy, is treated by religion, in his defeat, like those conquered generals whom the Roman Senate received in triumph, for the very reason that they had not despaired of the safety of the state. But if the ancients attributed something marvellous to the man who never gave up hope, what would

they have thought of the Christian who, in his wonderful language, no longer speaks of, but *practises* hope?

“Behold that young mother caressing her only child, how happy she is! She lives in the present and the future in this object of her tender love. What care, what vigilance! Her solicitude removes from his path all that might hurt his feet or grieve his heart. She is, in some measure, incarnate in him; she breathes from his mouth, she sees with his eyes, she loves with his heart. Poor mother! is your love, then, like a too-fervid sun, which causes the flower to wither and die on its stem? Gradually it droops and fades away; some murderous insect has stung its heart. In vain do you water it with your tears, and clasp it to your breast. Very soon heaven will have another angel, and the earth another grave.

“For you all is now broken: the present is full of sorrow, the future in this world has no more shining stars; thoughts of the past fill your mind, you

long for the return of its vanished happiness; there is night in your heart; it needs but little to make you wish for death. But a light, sent from God, shines in the midst of this dark night. Prostrate before the altar, you have found strength to bear your affliction. You say in supplication: 'Comfort of the afflicted, pray for me; give me back my child!' Your mind is calmed; peace and serenity return to you now. You know that you have an angel in heaven praying for you, and saying: 'Come, mother, come, I am waiting for you! Oh, how happy we shall be when we meet again! How sweet it is to enjoy God! How sweet to love my mother for all eternity, without fear of leaving her!' Yes, as soon as death takes from us those whom we most love, God sends us, to moderate our grief, the hope of seeing them once more, of knowing them again, of loving them in heaven, and of receiving from them the proofs of a special affection. How often has not this hope been a remedy

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for our wounds, and a balm for our
sorrows!"

LETTER OF ST. JEROME TO ST. PAULA, TO
CONSOLE HER FOR THE DEATH OF HER
DAUGHTER BLESILLA.—HISTORY OF THE
SICKNESS OF THE PIOUS WIDOW.*

Since her last sickness, Blesilla's health seemed better than ever, and she walked, as we had seen, with ardour in the path of her mother and sister, filling Paula with joy, and Marcella and St. Jerome with admiration. Alas! this joy was soon followed by tears. A short time after the death of Prætextatus, about the month of November of that year, 384, the fever, as it often happens with sick people at the dreaded season of falling leaves, once more seized Blesilla, and in a few days brought her to the verge of the tomb.

The news that Paula's daughter was again in danger spread consternation, not only in Paula's palace and at the

* Extracted from the Life of St. Paula, after St. Jerome, by Lagrange.

Aventine, but in all the patrician society where Paula was revered, and Blesilla, by her rare and charming qualities, had made so many friends. Even the people, who knew and loved her, were affected. The fever, however, progressed with frightful rapidity, and soon there was no more hope. God had accepted the good will of the young girl; her generosity had made up for the short duration of her penance. Four months had scarcely elapsed since her conversion to a fervent life, and already God judged her ripe for the crown, and gathered this flower for heaven.*

Her death was one of those of which only the lives of the saints offer an example, which delight us, and yet make us weep. She was twenty years of age, and she was going to die. Her mother, her sisters, her relatives, her friends, Marcella, and St. Jerome, all those who had loved her on earth, surrounded her

* Blesilla is honoured as a saint in some martyrologies, on the 22nd of January. (Baronius, vol. vi., ad annum 384.)

deathbed, bathed in tears. Blesilla alone did not weep. Although panting and burning with fever, a heavenly light illumined her pale face; an indescribable and unearthly beauty, like a last ray that was passing away, transfigured her. Yet a shadow passed all at once over her brow, a tear was visible in her eye; but it was not at leaving earth that this admirable girl wept. It was that she could not present to God a long penance, or a sufficient treasure of merits. She was then heard recommending herself earnestly to those around her. "Oh, beg the Lord Jesus," said she, "to have compassion on my soul, since I die without being able to accomplish all that was in my heart for Him."*

These were her last words. The dying girl's regret moved every one to tears. Jerome hastened to answer and console her. "Have confidence, dear Blesilla,"

* *Orate Dominum Jesum ut mihi ignoscat quia implere non potui quod volebam. (Epist. 22 ad Paulam, super obitu Blesillæ.)*

said he; "the white garments which you have worn since your consecration to the Lord should reassure you. Like them, your soul is pure. It is true that your return to God does not date very far back; but it was so generous that it did not come too late."* These words produced a profound peace in the soul of Paula's daughter. Soon after, as St. Jerome expresses it, disengaging herself from the bonds of the body, the white dove winged its flight to heaven; the daughter of God, exiled here below, entered into possession of the paternal inheritance.†

The blow was a terrible one to Paula. So many holy affections, pious joys, and maternal hopes were all at once buried in the grave. Strong as her soul was, it was overcome, and her grief was be-

* *Secura esto, mi Blesillæ, sentiens vestimenta tua candida. Candor vestium sempiternæ virginitatis est puritas. Confidimus probare vera quæ dicimus: nunquam est sera conversio.—Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

† *Sarcina carnis abjecta, ad suum anima revolavit auctorem, et in antiquam possessionem diu peregrinata conscendit.*

yond all bounds. The holy and courageous widow was wholly lost in the mother. She wished at least—melancholy consolation of an inconsolable grief, last proof of a love for ever crushed—that her beloved daughter's obsequies should be magnificent. In Rome these funeral ceremonies, for patricians especially, were usually conducted with great splendour. All the relatives and friends of the family considered it a duty to assist at them. And in this case a special interest in this young girl, formerly so brilliant in the world, and so generous in the service of God; but lately brought back from the gates of death, and again stricken so suddenly; and besides a respectful compassion for her venerable and afflicted mother,—attracted a great crowd to Blesilla's funeral. The long procession, composed of all the Roman nobility, advanced through the streets filled with an immense crowd of sorrowing people; in the rear of the procession came the coffin, which was covered with a pall of

gold. The austere St. Jerome, who so little approved of pomp, made no effort to prevent it.*

Paula thought herself strong enough to accompany Blesilla to her last home. She was mistaken; she had only taken a few steps when she fainted, and was brought back insensible to the house. This sight painfully moved the crowd, always so ready to judge rashly; and murmurs, excessive and violent like all popular murmurs, were heard. The people interpreted the maternal sorrow in their own way. "Did we not often say so? This poor woman mourns her daughter, who has been killed by fasting, and who leaves her no grandchildren, because she was prevented from marrying. We must drive that detestable race of monks from the city! Stone them! Throw them into the Tiber! It was they who seduced this poor matron. We can see that they

* Ex more parantur exequiæ, et nobilium ordine præeunte, aureum feretro velamen obtenditur.—*Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

made her a nun against her will, for no pagan woman ever wept so for her children.”*

Paula’s uncontrollable grief at her daughter’s funeral, far from being softened by the lapse of time, was only increased. She was overwhelmed by it. In vain, to fortify herself, and as a sign of submission to the divine will, was she seen incessantly making the sign of the cross on her mouth and on her breast. In spite of her, her heart failed.†

The image of her beloved daughter was ever before her eyes. She unceasingly recalled Blesilla’s words, her caresses, her kind attention, her charming conversation. To have lost all that for ever! This thought was insupportable to her. Her tears flowed continually, and at certain moments, when

* *Matronam miserabilem seduxerunt; quæquam monacha esse noluerit, hinc probatur, quod nulla gentiliū ita suos unquam fleverit filios.—Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

† Cum os stomachumque signaret, et matris dolorem crucis niteretur impressione lenire, superabatur affectu. (*Epitaph. Paulæ.*)

some vivid recollection seized her, the poor mother not only wept, but uttered piercing cries. She could take no nourishment, and they seriously feared for her life.*

This was too much, and Jerome saw that he must absolutely put a stop to her grief, and call all the powers of faith and charity to the assistance of that broken heart. But he himself had need of consolation. Of all his disciples, he was most attached to Blesilla; it was he who had, more than any one, decided and sustained her conversion; he had pursued the work with joy in spite of patrician anger. He knew all the virtues of this amiable young girl, and how far she might one day go in the way of perfection. Her death, which annihilated all these fair and cherished hopes, was to himself a severe blow, and

* *Ante oculos tuos filiæ semper imago versatur. . . . Redit tibi in memoriam confabulatio ejus blanditiæ, sermo, consortium; et quod his cares, pati non potes . . . Ululas et exclamitas, et quas quibusdam facibus accensa, quantum in te est tui semper homicida es. (Epist. 22 ad Paulam.)*

he shared in all the anguish of Paula. But, judging it necessary to control his own sorrow in order to aid Paula, he wrote that afflicted mother, with tears, as he himself tells us,* a letter, admirable in its delicacy, sensibility, and Christian faith. The ecclesiastical records have few pages so beautiful and tender; they will console, not only a mother's unspeakable sorrow, to which nothing can be compared, but will comfort all poor hearts in the bitter trials, the cruel separations with which life abounds, and which every human soul knows in turn here below.

For, after all, in these crushing blows, in which at first we can see nothing, there is, nevertheless, a reason to be found; in the darkness which great sorrow sheds over the soul there is yet light to be sought. No sorrow, however sacred, should cast a shadow on everything; the Christian soul should bend, but should also rise again under the hand of God. This is what St.

* Totus hic liber fletibus scribitur.

Jerome tries to do for Paula and for himself.

He begins, as should always be done with those who suffer, to mourn with Paula: "Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes? and I will weep, not like Jeremias, the death of my hope, nor, like our Saviour, the woes of Jerusalem; but I will mourn over the holiness, the sweetness, the innocence, the purity of all the virtues which Blesilla carried with her to the grave. It is not, however, for her who has left us that we must mourn; but for ourselves, who have lost her." Then he added: "My cheeks are bathed in tears, sobs choke my voice, emotion restrains the words on my lips! Alas! what am I doing? I would stop a mother's tears, and I weep myself! Poor comforter, he who cannot control his own sorrow, and who, instead of words, has only lamentations! Yet Jesus Himself wept for Lazarus, because He loved him. I declare, O Paula, before that Saviour in whose presence your

daughter now dwells, and before His holy angels, whose companion she is now become, that I can feel all that you suffer? Was I not her father? Did I not form and tenderly nourish her soul, by that charity for her which Jesus Christ had inspired in my heart?"*

But still, in spite of this sorrow, so vividly expressed, he must seek to console this mother. Whence shall Jerome draw the consolation which he would offer to Paula?

It was necessary, in the first place, to answer that sorrowful complaint, that fearful doubt which in times of affliction assails even good souls, before the unfathomable depths of the judgments of God, and the impenetrable mystery of His ways. St. Jerome experienced this doubt as well as Paula. "And I said:

* *Lacrymis ora complentur, singultus occupat vocem, et hærentem linguam commota viscera non laxant. Quid agimus? Matris prohibitori lacrymas, ipsi plangimus. . . Non est optimus consolator quem proprii vincunt gemitus. Testor, mi Paula, Jesum, quem nunc Blesilla sequitur, eadem me dolorum perpeti tormenta quæ pateris, patrem spiritu, nutritium charitate.—Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

It is, then, in vain that I have purified my heart and washed my hands among the innocent, and sought to penetrate that mystery; and my eyes have seen only great labour until I entered into the sanctuary of God, and I looked at the end of things."

This sanctuary of God faith alone can open; of this end of things faith alone has the secret. To the doubts of nature, Jerome answered by the certainty of God's goodness.

"God is good, and all that comes from a good God is necessarily good, and for our welfare. This is what should be said, with full meaning, by the mother who loses a child, the wife who loses her husband, by whoever is afflicted with any of the evils which are showered on human life,—poverty, sickness, suffering. We say that we believe in Christ; well, let us then give ourselves up to His holy will."*

* *Bonus est Deus, et omnia quæ bonus facit bona sint necesse est. . . . Qui se credere dicit Christo, in omnibus Christi judiciis gaudeat.*

This thought, so simple and so true, would have sufficed to make Paula cast herself, with closed eyes and confiding heart, into the abyss of the judgments of God ; but to this first motive for consolation, derived from the certainty of faith, St. Jerome adds another, derived from the certainty of hope, which he unfolds to Paula in the powerful language and the profound allegories of the holy Scripture, which she loved so much: "Let us weep only the dead who go down into the abyss of fire. We, the faithful, who are surrounded by troops of angels, and met by Christ Himself at our departure from this world, should rather complain of dwelling so long in these tabernacles of death; for, as long as we are here below, we are exiles, far from the Lord. Let us desire to go to Him. Let us cry out: Ah! but our exile is long! I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Cedar! How strange was my soul among them! For if Cedar means darkness, and therefore is used to designate the world, of

which it is said, ‘ And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it,’ we should then congratulate our dear Blesilla, who has passed from darkness into light, while scarcely beginning to merit the crown of consummate virtue. Ah! if an untimely death—God ever preserve from such all who love her—had overtaken her when she was entirely occupied with the world, intoxicated by its pleasures, we might then have wept for her with floods of tears.* But by the grace of Jesus Christ, four months before she trampled the world under foot, and gave herself entirely to God. Do you not fear that the Lord may say to you, ‘ Paula, do you regret that your daughter became My child? You are angry with My judgments; your rebellious tears outrage the love which made Me call Blesilla to Myself. You refuse nourishment, not through penance, but

* *Revera si sæculare desiderium, et quod Deus a suis avertat, delicias vitæ hujus cogitantem, mors immatura rapuisset, plangenda erat et omni lacrymarum fonte ploranda.—Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

through an excessive grief. Well, I am not pleased with this abstinence; these fasts rejoice My enemy alone. Is this what you promised Me when you made your profession of a monastic life? Is it for this that you separated from other matrons? Let those who wear silken robes mourn like this. If your faith did not fail in this trial, if you really believed that your daughter still lives, would you mourn like this because she had gone to a better world?"*

But what! is nothing to be allowed for nature in these hard trials? Assuredly there is. "Faith does not forbid us to mourn, but to mourn like the Gentiles." And, in fact, this great gift of tears comes from God, this rich treasure of the human soul, the source which awakes in us depths of feeling and of love. This source can flow when opened by the stroke of sorrow. Weep then, O mothers who have lost your chil-

* Mens ista quæ plangit, sericarum vestium est. Si viventem crederes filiam, nunquam plangeres ad meliora migrasse.—*Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

dren, but weep not beyond measure, nor inconsolably. "We pardon," says St. Jerome, "a mother's tears, but we wish to see some limit to them. When I reflect that you are a mother, oh, no, I cannot blame you for weeping; but when I consider that you are a Christian, I would wish, Paula, that the Christian would somewhat console the mother."*

"But," continued he, "the wound is too recent, and in spite of my efforts to probe it gently, I may perhaps irritate the wound that I wish to heal. Let me, then, find a powerful example to place before Paula's eyes. Behold," said he, "the great model which is given us in Job; every misfortune, every affliction burst on him at once, and yet what does he do? He ceases not for one moment to look to heaven with hope. He was a just man, you will tell me, and God did not punish, but tried him. Well, you,

* *Ignoscimus matris lacrymis, sed quærimus modum in dolore. Si parentem cogito, non reprehendo quod plangis; si Christianam et monacham, istis nominibus mater excluditur.—Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

Paula, to say all in one word, you are just, or you are a sinner. If you are the former, it is a trial: and if the latter, why do you complain? You suffer less than you deserve.”*

Then, addressing himself to her maternal heart, and recalling the poor mother's thoughts from the daughter who was dead to the one who yet remained, he begged her, in the name of Eustochium, not to mourn so excessively for Blesilla. “If the certain glory of Blesilla does not suffice to dry your tears, at least spare the young and gentle Eustochium, who is still at so tender an age, and who has so much need of a mother for guidance and support in the path in which she walks.”†

And, speaking at last with the authority of his priesthood, as was often necessary, when he had tried everything

* Et tu e duobus elige quod velis: aut sancta es, et probaris; aut peccatrix, et injuste quereris minora sustinens quam mereris.—*Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

† Parce filiæ cum Christo regnanti; parce saltem Eustochio tuæ, cujus parva adhuc ætas et rudis pene infantia te magistra dirigitur.—*Ibid.*

to calm that boundless grief which is powerless over itself, which forgets and abandons itself, he went so far as to speak to Paula some harsh and severe words: "In your love for your children take care of not loving God enough.* This is a snare of Satan. He seeks to take possession of you by the strange charm of tears, and continually recalling to you the image of a beloved daughter, he hopes at once to destroy the mother of her who has conquered him, and afterwards to triumph over her orphaned and forsaken sister. I do not wish to give you vain terrors, and God is my witness that I speak as though we were before His tribunal. That sorrow which has no bounds, and which carries you to the verge of the grave, is faithless and sacrilegious. You cry and sob; one would say that you wish to die. Then hear Jesus, who comes to you full of mercy, and says, 'Your child is not

* *Grandis in suos pietas impietas in Deum est. . . Detestandæ sunt lacrymæ, plenæ sacrilegio, incredulitate, quæ non habent modum, et usque viciniam mortis accedunt.—Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

dead but sleepeth.' You bend continually over the grave, weeping, like Mary Magdalen over the sepulchre of our Saviour. Well, I say to you, as said the angel to Magdalen, 'Why seek you the living among the dead?'"

Yes, Blesilla was alive, and by the certainty of Christian faith Jerome showed her to Paula in the glory of heaven, and made the desolate mother hear the language of her happy child: "You who shed so many tears for your daughter, will you not hear her when she cries: 'If you ever loved me, O my mother, if you nourished me with your milk, if you formed my soul by your words and your virtues, oh, I implore you, do not envy me the glory and the happiness which I enjoy. You think that I have no mother; I have one here, the Mother of our Saviour. No sisters; I have a multitude here whom I did not know. You weep because I have left the world; I pity you far more for being still there, exposed to sorrow, to dangers of all kinds. Oh, will you

continue my mother, and one day meet me again? Consider one thing only; love the Lord, and be beloved by Him.* It is thus that you will remain my true mother.' How many things besides does Blesilla say to you, and how many prayers does she offer to God for you."

And here the aged priest, who has made so great an effort to offer this afflicted mother the highest and most powerful consolation of faith, falls back in some measure on his own heart, softened by his recollections, giving once more to Paula that proof of sympathy, the truest and sweetest that can be offered to sorrow, which is that of showing that in consoling others we are not ourselves consoled, and that we sympathize always with them.

"She is also praying for me, I trust, in return for what I have done for

* *Clamat nunc illa lugenti: si unquam me amasti, mater; si tua ubera suxi, si in tuis instituta sum monitis, ne invidas gloriæ meæ. . . At ego vestri sortem doleo, quos adhuc sæculi carcer includit. Si vis ut mater mea sis, cura placere Christo.—Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

her, and she will obtain the pardon of my sins; for you know, O Paula, how much I was devoted to her soul, and all that I fearlessly braved in order to save her."*

In truth, we may well say, after these beautiful pages from an elegant interpreter of Christianity, nothing avails for the soul in sorrow but the consolations of religion. They are not vain, they rest on solid truths, on unshaken certainties, and this is why they penetrate so deep. Unfortunate are those who have them not! There is nothing outside of them that the soul can receive, and the heart without support falls back crushed on itself. Neither stoical philosophy nor worldly levity is of any use here. Religion alone, relying on the promises of God, shows to our eager hearts an assured existence, a happiness which will not deceive us beyond the grave. The separation is but an ab-

* Mihique, ut de ejus mente securus sim, veniam impetrat peccatorum; quod monui, quod hortatus sum, quod invidiam propinquorum, ut salva esset, excepi.—*Epist. 22 ad Paulam.*

sence; we will see them once more in a better life. And because religion binds closer the bonds of hope between those who are gone and those who remain, it also preserves between them, living, immortal, and unchangeable, the affection which united them. No, never does religion appear more divine than by a grave.

LETTER OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES TO A
MOTHER,

“Cheer up, your child is in heaven with the angels and the Holy Innocents. He is grateful to you for the care which you have taken of him during the little time that he was left in your charge, and especially for the prayers which you offered for him. In return, he prays to God for you, and obtains many blessings for your life, that you may conform more and more to the divine will, and by this means gain that which he now enjoys. Abide in peace, my very dear daughter, and keep your heart on heaven, where you have a little saint.”

LETTER OF FENELON TO A LADY IN
AFFLICTION.

“ Madam,—It is a melancholy consolation to say that I feel for your sorrow. It is, however, all that our feeble humanity can do, and to do more than this we must have recourse to God. It is to Him, then, madam, that I address myself, to this Comforter of the afflicted, Protector of the weak, I pray Him not to take away your grief, but that you may profit by it; that He may give you fortitude to sustain it, that He will not suffer you to be overcome by it. The sovereign remedy for the extreme evils of our nature is great and lively sorrow; it is amidst suffering that the great mystery of Christianity is accomplished, that is to say, the interior crucifixion of man. It is then that all the power of grace is developed, that it works out its most secret operation, which is that of teaching us to detach ourselves from self; without this the love of God is not in us. We must come out of our-

selves to be able to give ourselves to God. That we may be obliged to come out of ourselves, our hearts must be wounded, so that everything created becomes bitter to us. Then the heart, wounded in its most cherished part, disturbed in its sweetest, purest, and most innocent attachments, feels that it can no longer support itself, and goes out from itself to God,

“Behold, madam, the great remedy for the great evils with which sin overwhelms us. The remedy is violent, but the evil is also deep. This is the true support of Christians in affliction. When God afflicts two persons piously united, He confers a great good on both; He transports one into glory, and disengages from the earth the affections of the one who remains here below. This, madam, is what God has done for you. May He, by His Holy Spirit, awaken all your faith, that you may discover these truths. I will pray Him without ceasing to that end; and as I have great confidence in the prayers of much-

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afflicted persons, I entreat you in the midst of your sorrow to pray for me. Your charity will tell you of what I have need, and will make you ask it with fervour."

EXTRACTS FROM SOME OF FENELON'S LETTERS.

"May God send His consolation to the depth of your afflicted heart. The wound is terrible, but the hand of the Comforter is powerful. No; it is only the senses and the imagination that have lost their object. We can no longer see him, but he is more than ever with us. We find him unceasingly in our common centre. There he sees us, procures for us true assistance. He knows our infirmities better, since he no longer has his own, and he asks the remedies necessary for our cure. As for me, who was deprived of seeing him . . . I speak to him, I open my heart to him, I believe I find him before God; and though I have wept him bitterly, I cannot believe that I have lost him.

Oh, but there is a reality in this intimate and invisible companionship of the children of God."

"We shall soon find again that which we have lost; we are approaching it every day with rapid strides. Yet a little while, and there will be no cause for weeping. It is we who shall die; those we love live and die no more. This is what we believe, but we believe it feebly; if we really believed we should do for those most dear to us what Jesus Christ wished that His disciples should do for Him when He ascended into heaven. 'If you love Me,' said He, 'you would indeed be glad because of My glory.' "*"

"But we weep for ourselves in weeping over those we mourn. We might be troubled about persons who have led a worldly life; but for a true friend of God, who has been faithful and humble, we can only behold his happiness and the blessings which he draws down on those who are dear to him here below.

* John xiv. 28.

Let your sorrow, then, be assuaged by the very hand of God which has stricken you.

“Every day I beg of God to console you. There is a consolation which our heart refuses, and with reason; it is vain and unworthy of the spirit of grace. But there is another consolation which comes from God alone. He soothes afflicted nature; He makes us feel that we have lost nothing, and that we shall find in Him all that we seem to have lost; He makes them present to us by faith and love, and shows us that we are following closely on those who go before us; He dries our tears with His own hand. I trust that He who has afflicted you by this overwhelming stroke will moderate your sorrow; it is only He who can do it.”

“Let us unite our heart with him whom we mourn. He sees us, he loves us, he is touched by our wants, and prays for us. Far from having lost him, you will find him more present, more united to you, more capable of giving

you comfort, more efficacious in his counsels of perfection, if you will change, for the pure companionship of faith, that visible companionship in which you so lately were with him. As for me, I find a real consolation of heart in being so often with him in spirit. . . . May the courage of faith sustain you. It is a courage which has in it nothing high, and which gives us no sensible support on which we can count. We find no resource in ourselves, and yet, when occasion offers, it is not wanting. We are rich in our poverty, we give ourselves up to God, no longer keeping within ourselves. Then all gradually becomes recollection, silence, dependence on grace at any moment, and interior life in perpetual death. In this state we possess nothing which we can see, and with this simple and most intimate union, we find in God all that we believed we had lost."

LET US THINK OF HEAVEN.

The ringing of bells calls the faithful to a sacred solemnity. Let us rejoice, O Christians. The Church, our mother, lifting to-day a corner of the veil which hides the heavenly Jerusalem, shows to her children the saints of all times, all countries, and all ages and conditions. What an innumerable multitude. What a magnificent retinue surrounds the throne of the Divine Lamb. Why this joyous festival, and those hymns of gladness? What is the Church's idea in the beautiful festival of All Saints? Let us consider for a moment what she teaches us, listening to her maternal voice, which is always one of mercy and of love.

Many saints have their special feast. But how many others, and by far the greater number, are unknown to the world, and known to God alone? The Church would also celebrate their triumph. This is why to-day she contemplates in heaven that "great multitude which no man can number," as

says the beloved disciple, "of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." (Apoc. xii. 9.) She sings the signal victory of each one of these elect, and pays them all a just tribute of homage and of veneration.

On us, the faithful, the Church then casts her maternal eyes. She says to each of us, in loving and tender language, "Behold, my child, these brilliant crowns! They are the price of the victories of your companions who have gone before you into life. Many amongst them have shared your labours, your prayers, and your weariness; many of them have lived in the same condition as yourself. Many, perhaps, have conquered obstacles more insurmountable than yours. Ah, courage then! Why will you not do as they have done? Companion of the labours, will you not also be the companion of their happiness and their glory?"

I know a venerable religious who always ends his conversation with a visitor by this gracious salutation: "Courage, my child, we shall go to paradise." Such is also the language of the Church to each of us on this august solemnity. "Courage," she says to us; "behold heaven, behold the crown which awaits you. Yet a few days, and we shall be in paradise."

Let us think of heaven. What! should it be necessary that one day in the year our Mother's voice gives this sweet and loving invitation? Should not every day of our lives pass in the almost incessant thought of that happy abode which shall be our inheritance?

What is there gloomy in this thought? The poor exile who dreams of that distant land to which he may one day return, cheers himself by singing the airs of his country; he sings of the happiness of returning, of the joys of the paternal hearth. Would you say to him, "My friend, those airs are too sad; rather sing of the charms of the present

dwelling"? Ah, the poor exile will not understand you; he will continue the song of his mountains; and if he seems to be sad and to weep, they are the tears of affection and of joy that he will shed. Young soldiers in foreign service have been seen, on hearing the "Ranz des Vaches" (celebrated air of Swiss herdsmen), or some song of their distant country, to almost faint with excess of joy, like a happy mother who, after years of absence, receives once more her beloved son into her arms.

Let us think of heaven, and, as St. Bernard says, "If the labour frightens us, let the reward encourage us."* But the children of the world, with eyes always turned earthward, will not think of it. Like those unfortunate slaves condemned to the mines in pagan Rome, and who, far from the sunlight, buried in the bowels of the earth, dug the gold hid in its bosom, the greater number of men, voluntarily condemning themselves to similar labour, see their painful and

* Si labor terret, merces invitet.

gloomy days glide by, far from the resplendent sun of hope. And yet this hope is beautiful; and one of the strangest mysteries of human life is that unheard-of thoughtlessness which despises it. What! all that can be given to a creature, the possession of the fulness of being, of knowledge, of love, to contemplate with clear vision the divine essence, to be overwhelmed with torrents of the purest delights, to be happy with the happiness of God Himself, and to enjoy for eternity this boundless bliss in the company of Mary, the angels, and saints. O Christians! what a future! what a hope! How is it that our souls, eager, panting, insatiable, cannot feel the value of such marvellous felicity?

Let us think of heaven. No, once more, this thought cannot sadden us. It is the rainbow in the firmament which rejoices the sight after a storm; it is the limpid stream which slakes the pilgrim's thirst in a sandy desert; it is the honeycomb which nourishes the

traveller, exhausted and weary. Heaven! Do you know that it is the country of God's friends, where that liberal, munificent God displays all the treasures of His power and of His love? In how many ways do His greatness and magnificence shine forth? The whole universe is filled with His wonders. "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the works of His hands."* On the earth His hand has scattered innumerable treasures, all appropriated to the service of man. And yet the earth is a place of exile, and the prison of sinful men. Heaven is the true land promised to the hope of the just. Heaven is the kingdom of the angels and of the elect, the very throne of God. It is there alone that God is magnificent.† As it is said in the holy Scriptures, "O my God," cried the royal prophet in his ecstasy, "I will be satisfied when Thy glory appears to me."

* Ps. xviii. 1,

† Ibi solummodo magnificus.

Let us think of heaven, and reflect on the happiness which awaits us there. Ah, doubtless, we can have here below only a very imperfect idea of that future bliss. But yet the infirmity of our nature can catch a sufficient glimpse of it to make us appreciate its infinite value. We clearly understand that man, possessing three eminent faculties, namely, *knowing*, *loving*, and *acting*,—these faculties may be perfected to an indefinite degree, and that from this perfection there should spring an immeasurable source of happiness for the soul in heaven.

“If the Supreme Goodness condescends to adorn so richly this first dwelling of man,” says the learned and pious Charles Bonnet, “if He has scattered around us such great beauty, lavished so much sweetness, accumulated so many benefits; if all the parts of nature combine to furnish man with inexhaustible sources of pleasure—what do I say?—if that Ineffable Goodness surrounds and encloses man on all sides

here below, what will He not lavish upon him in the heavenly Jerusalem? What beauty, richness, and variety of magnificent sights will He not present to his view in the house of God, where the *Being, existing by Himself*, gives to the celestial hierarchy the most august signs of His adorable presence?

“It will be in this eternal abode, in the midst of light, perfection, and bliss, that we shall read the general and particular history of Providence. Initiated, then, to a certain extent into the profound mysteries of His government, His laws, and dispensations, we shall behold with admiration the secret reasons for so many general and particular events, which astonish, confound, and cast us into that doubt which philosophy does not always dispel, but in which religion always reassures us. We shall meditate unceasingly on that great book of the destiny of the world. We shall then discover without surprise the various revolutions which this little globe has undergone before assuming its

present form, and shall follow with our eyes all those which it is to undergo in the lapse of ages. But what will most excite our admiration and gratitude will be the wonders of that great *Redemption*, which now contains so many things above our feeble understanding, which has been the object of the close research and profound meditation of the prophets, and which the angels themselves love to contemplate. A word of that page will also retrace our own history, and develop the *why* and *wherefore* of those calamities, of those trials, of those privations, which so often here below try the patience, purify the soul, exalt the virtues of the just, and shake and overcome the weak. Having attained a superior degree of knowledge, the origin of physical and moral evils shall no longer perplex us; we shall regard them distinctly in their source and in their most remote effects; and we shall acknowledge with truth *that all which God has made is good*. On earth we observe only effects, and even only then

in a very superficial manner; the cause of everything is hidden from us. Then we shall see *effects* in their *causes*, *consequences* in their *origin*, etc. At present we see things confusedly, and as if through a dim glass; but there we shall see them face to face, and we shall know, in some sort, as we have been known. Finally, because we shall have an incomparably more complete and distinct knowledge of the *work*, we shall also acquire a much more profound idea of the perfections of the *Worker*. And how much shall this science, the most sublime, the most vast, and most desirable of all, or rather, the *only science*, be unceasingly a most intimate intercourse with the *Eternal Source* of all perfection. I cannot express it, I can only stammer, words fail me; I would wish to borrow the language of the angels. If it were possible that a finite intelligence should ever exhaust the *universe*, it would draw for ever and ever, from the contemplation of its Author, new treasures of truth, and, after a thousand myriads of

ages spent in meditation, it would¹ only have skimmed that science, of which the most lofty intellect possesses, perhaps, but the first rudiments.”*

In the “Confessions” of St. Augustine there is a solemn and touching scene which might furnish the Christian artist with the subject of a grand and graceful picture. Hear what the son of Monica says:

“And when the day was near that she was to depart out of this life, . . . she and I were standing alone, leaning upon a window that looked into the garden of the house where we were, in that town of Ostia upon Tiber, where, retired from company and noise after the fatigue of a long journey, we were repairing our spirits for our voyage by sea, and there we two alone discoursed together very sweetly, and, forgetting those things which are behind, and stretching ourselves forth to those things that are before, we were inquir-

* Charles Bonnet, *Palingenesie Philosophique*, part xxii.

ing between ourselves in the presence of truth what the eternal life of the saints shall be, which 'neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man.' But yet we panted with the mouth of our heart after the heavenly streams of Thy fountain, the fountain of life which is with Thee, that being sprinkled from thence, according to our present capacity, we might, in some small measure, conceive so great a thing.

"Whilst we spoke of that life which is no other than eternal wisdom, and were wholly attracted towards it, a sudden transport of our hearts brought us even in some sort to see and take it; and the sight of that great object made us sigh with love and grief, inasmuch as we were not yet in a state to enjoy it fully.

"Thou knowest, O Lord, that upon that day we discoursed upon such things; and whilst, amidst our talk, this world, with all its delights, appeared contemptible to us; she said to me, 'Son, for my

part, there is nothing now in this life that gives me any delight. What I have to do here any longer, or why I am here I know not, all my hopes of this world being now at an end. One thing there was for which I did desire to stay a little longer in this life, which was that I might see thee a Christian and a Catholic before I died. And my God hath granted me this more abundantly, in that I see thee now despising all earthly felicity, entirely devoted to His service. What have I to do here?"

A few days after God heard the prayer of the happy mother of Augustine, and she contemplated face to face that *Eternal Wisdom* of which she, with her son, had caught some feeble rays. If, like the pious Monica, we cannot yet say, "What have I now to do here?" and sigh after the end of our course, at least let us sometimes contemplate, like her, the treasures of *Eternal Wisdom*; let us think of heaven, so as to appreciate at their just value the goods, the pleasures of earth, and renew our strength and

courage, so as to gain the rich crown which awaits us there.

LETTER OF ST. LEGER TO HIS MOTHER,
ST. SIGRADE.*

Whilst the cruel Ebroin, minister of the king, in the year 700, persecuted St. Leger, Bishop of Autun, St. Sigrade, mother of that saint, was still alive, and shared his sufferings. Ebroin, who persecuted the whole family, having confiscated the goods of that lady, in order to make sure of her, commanded her to retire to the monastery which he had founded at Soissons. Sigrade embraced the religious life with such fervour that she felt her own misfortunes less than those of her children.

St. Leger wrote a very beautiful letter to console her, or rather, he had it written by some one to whom he dictated it. After having shown her the advantages of suffering, he speaks to her of those of the religious life.

* Taken from the History of the Church of France.
See also Butler's Lives of the Saints, October 2.

“No language,” said he, “can express the joy which you should feel in the Lord. You have left behind what you were obliged to abandon. The Lord has heard your prayers; He has seen the tears which you have abundantly shed in His presence; He has taken from you what seemed to have kept you back in the path of salvation; so that, loosed from the bands which attached you to the world, you might live for God, and taste how sweet is the Lord. . . . O happy death which gives life! happy loss of goods which procures eternal riches! happy sorrow which merits the joy of angels! You have already experienced the mercies of the Lord. He has inspired you with contempt for the world, to make you practise the observance of a holy will. He has delivered your children from the miseries of the world, and has given them the hope of eternal life; whereas you might have mourned them as dead, if, in dying, you had left them on earth.”

BOOK II.

CONSOLATION.

WE MEET AGAIN IN HEAVEN.

All things pass away here below. The figure of this world, to speak in the language of the holy book, "is a tent which will soon be carried away." A little sooner or a little later, all will go the same road. But though all disappears and is swept away, nothing perishes which has been animated for one moment by the breath of God. Our immortal soul, freed from the covering of the body, then begins a new life. What do I say? It is only there that it fully lives. Man only half lives during his life. We may then say that the life of the soul, in some measure, only commences at the death of the body, if that body itself were not one

day to rise again in glory, to live with the soul, the companion of its exile, in an immortal and blissful life.

But, over all these sorrowful partings here below, the faithful Christian sees hovering a celestial figure, the sight of which consoles him. It is the angel of hope. Beneath his white wings he carries mysterious treasures, which he displays to our eyes, or pours into our soul. Amongst them I distinguish a banner gleaming with gold, on which I read these words, *We meet again in heaven.*

It is allowable to believe and hope that we shall meet again, and know each other in heaven, and that our bliss will be increased by that of our friends. The very doubt of this is repugnant to the nature of our souls, and reason agrees wonderfully with faith in attaching us to this sweet and consoling hope. Yes; in heaven, if we have the happiness of going there, we shall see once more our relatives and friends; we shall love them with a more lively, more

tender, and more perfect love; and this love, which made here below a great part of our happiness, will again contribute to increase for us the felicity of heaven. And why should it not be so? Our faculties will not be changed in the world to come, but they will be expanded, developed, and will receive the complement which they lacked here on earth. Possessing, as much as creatures can, the plenitude of being, of knowledge, and of love, the souls of the elect will lose none of their legitimate affections; they will feel them, on the contrary, much more vividly. They will love in God and through God, with a *benevolent love*, all whom they have loved on earth; and this love, thus purified and perfected, will be stronger, more solid, and more sublime. It is there that gratitude and love will be untrammelled, and will pay to the beloved being the true tribute of which those on earth were but faint and imperfect pledges.

A young author, recently snatched

away in the flower of his age from religion and from his numerous friends, thus bade farewell to his beloved companion: "To my tender Amelia, who has been the joy and charm of my life, . . . I address a farewell, short, like earthly things. I thank her, I bless her, and I await her. In heaven alone I can repay all the love which I owe her,"*

Thus speaks the Christian heart. It is on high, not here below, that it is fully expanded, and renders to God, in the first place and above all, then to his friends on earth, the true homage of gratitude and love.

It seems superfluous to pursue this point any further. All the doctors, all the saints have regarded earth as an exile, a place of passage, and heaven as their country, the blissful abode of *eternal reunion*. Let us quote a few lines from the good St. Francis de Sales. He thus writes to a pious lady against

* Testament of A. Ozanam. See *Bulletin de la Société de St. Vincent de Paul*. October, 1853.

the fear of death : " Consider the persons whom you love the best, from whom it will pain you to be separated, as persons with whom you will be eternally in heaven, for instance, your husband, your little John, your father. Oh, that little boy will one day be, with God's help, blessed in that eternal life, in which he will enjoy my happiness and rejoice at it. I will rejoice at his, and I will rejoice in his, and I will rejoice that we are to part no more. So of the husband, so of the father, and the others."*

I know another mother, pious and tender, as most of them are, who went home one day after hearing a sermon on *Heaven*, with her mind very much disturbed. From certain passages which she had wrongly understood, she imagined that our soul in heaven would be so absorbed in the contemplation of the perfections of God, and in the ecstasy of divine love, that all else would be as nothing, and that it would be then

* Works of St. Francis de Sales, letter 787.

estranged from all creatures and from all other love. And this poor mother, who had lately lost a beloved daughter, was afflicted at the sad thought of neither meeting, knowing again, or loving her in that heavenly abode. And that beautiful heaven, the ravishing delights of which she had just heard described, no longer seemed to her a dwelling of perfect happiness. It was my privilege to prove to her satisfaction that in heaven we know our own.

REFLECTIONS AT A GRAVE.

THERE ARE ONLY TWO DWELLINGS WHERE
NOTHING PASSES AWAY.

(MGR. GERBET.)

This, then, is all that remains in this world of one who was, and who always will be, so much loved. This, then, is the end of a life which, perhaps, promised to itself yet long days to come.

Let us adore the will of God on the

verge of this grave, and elevate our thoughts towards that dwelling which alone is not a place of passage.

Let us say, with a lively faith, that we only confide to the earth a germ of immortality. This poor body will very soon be dissolved; but whilst it is decomposed by the hand of death, there is an ineffable and almighty Hand working to repair it. We sow in this grave a corruptible body, it will come forth incorruptible; we sow it in lowliness, it will come forth in glory; we sow it in infirmity, it will come forth in power; we sow an animal body, it will come forth a spiritual body. Therefore, this grave, which we call the body's last resting-place, is not so; it is only a stopping-place.

O NOTHINGNESS OF HUMAN HOPES!

(BOSSUET.)

What have the children of Adam to hope for? All passes away, all disappears; our lives are but as a shadow on the earth, and nothing remains; our

vain pleasures vanish, our glory is but for a moment. Where are the ancient kings whose names were so famous in the world? They sleep in their graves, and their souls are, perhaps, in torments. O nothingness of human hopes! O my soul, come and taste with Jesus Christ of a better hope. What are the goods of the earth? What is an earthly kingdom? Vain pomp, the splendour of a day, a terrible responsibility for the conscience. O Lord, I will one day reign with Thee. My soul will be happy, because it shall see Thy light; my body will be glorious and full of life, for Thy body, which I shall receive, will shed on me its power. One day, when death comes, You will be to me, O my Jesus, a sweet Viaticum; amid the shadows of death I will fear no evil, for Thou wilt be with me; my body will rest in peace, and corruption will not retain me; Thou wilt show me the path of life, Thou wilt fill me with the joy of Thy countenance; I shall be crowned for ever with heavenly joys.

“It is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God.”
(Ps. lxxii. 28.)

IN ITS LAST END MY SOUL SHALL ALSO
LEAVE ITS MISERABLE BODY.

(ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.)

My soul shall one day depart from this body; but when, how, and in what manner it will happen, God alone knows. Of one thing only I am certain,—that we shall all die, and that, as regards myself, it may occur sooner than I think; that then the world will end for me, with all its vanities and amusements, pomps and concupiscence.

Ah, Lord, I shall then see for what trifles and vain fancies I have so basely offended Thee. Then, also, I shall find, perhaps too late, O my God, that the sins which seemed to me here below so small, will then appear like mountains, whilst my good works and prayers will seem very small.

TEMPORARY EXPIATION.

(MGR. GERBET.)

The doctrine of purgatory is connected with that of penance, which is itself a fundamental one of Christianity; for if penance is necessary, the merest good sense will suggest to us the idea of a place of temporary expiation beyond this life. Does it not often happen that death, coming suddenly upon us, is useless for penance, because it is received without being accepted, and it makes a victim without there being a holocaust? And, even when God allows, between the first day of the heart's conversion and the last one of life, a sufficiently long time for expiation, there is always a strong probability that we frequently reach the end of our earthly trial before having reached the fount of penance. It follows from this that there must be, beyond the limits of this world, a last station where all is regulated and finished. And is it not reasonable to believe that God does for the Christian

what a father would do for one of his children who has to expiate some wrong against the paternal love? He condemns him to an absence.

PIETY TOWARDS THE DEAD.

(P. FELIX.)

Devotion to the dead is not only the expression of a dogma, and the manifestation of a belief; it is one of the charms of life, a consolation to the heart. Of all that Protestantism has retrenched from the integrity of Catholic doctrine, the most astonishing and inconceivable is undoubtedly the suppression of prayer and sacrifice for the faithful departed; the destruction of that sacred intercourse which unites us even after death to those whom we have loved during life.

What is there, in truth, sweeter to the heart than that pious remembrance of the dead and their sufferings? To believe in the efficacy of prayers and good works for the relief of those we have lost; to believe that we may still help them; to believe, in a word, that

even in the invisible world where they dwell our love can still reach them by its benefits. What a sweet, what a lovely belief! and in this belief what consolation for those who have seen death enter under their roof, and strike very near their hearts. This mixture of religion and sorrow, of prayer and love, has an indescribable something, at once tender and exquisite. Do faith, hope, and charity ever better unite to honour God in consoling men than in making the relief of the dead the consolation of the living?

MEANS OF RELIEVING THE DEAD.

I.—PRAYER.

To bury the dead with pious respect, to honour as much as is in your power their mortal remains,—these are duties which the holy Scriptures place in the rank of meritorious and praiseworthy works. Let men, then, acquit them-

selves of these sacred duties towards those they love; let them grant this alleviation to their human sorrow, provided that they offer up to God with yet more zeal those prayers which will be useful to their friends and relatives, dead according to the flesh, and not according to the spirit. The pomp of funerals, the crowd which accompanies them, the careful burial, the magnificence of tombs, may indeed, in their way, console the living in their grief, but can do nothing for the dead. What really relieves them is prayer, the sacrifice of the altar, and alms given to the poor.*

Such is the teaching of the Fathers, going back to the apostolic times.

Faithful to her tradition, the Church, incomparable mother, raises to heaven every day her suppliant voice in favour of the souls in purgatory, whom she has not ceased to reckon amongst her children. Her tenderness, moved by their sufferings, follows them beyond the

* St. Augustine.

grave, and in their place of painful expiation supplies, by the constancy of her prayers, the insufficiency of ours. And when no one remembers them, nor us here below, the Church still prays, and will always pray. There is not one of her public or private offices in which the memento for the dead has not a special place in the prayers of the priest. The sweet prayer for rest, *requiem*; of eternal rest, *requiem æternam*; of rest in peace, *requiescat in pace*,—is incessantly repeated for the faithful who have died in the faith.

Every day, at all the Masses which are celebrated in the world, the priest applies to the faithful departed the touching prayer which opened heaven to the good thief: *Memento, Domine*. Remember, O Lord, Thy servants who have gone before us with the sign of faith. Be mindful of them, but remember not, O Lord, their sins. Pour forth on them the Blood of Jesus Christ here present on the altar; and may this

Precious Blood admit them to a place of refreshment, light, and peace.

“It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.”*

But of all prayers there are none to be compared to those which ascend to God in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the real continuation, and not merely the figure, of the sacrifice of the cross. On the altar, as on Calvary, our Lord Jesus Christ offers Himself as a victim for the living and the dead. Let us, then, often draw from this fountain of grace for our beloved dead, by causing the holy sacrifice of the Mass to be celebrated for the repose of their souls. The merits of this divine sacrifice are infinite, and our unworthiness can take nothing from them. This is a great consolation for us, who may so justly doubt the efficacy of our poor prayers.

* 2 Mach. xii. 46.

II.—GOOD WORKS.

“Who can doubt,” again writes St. Augustine, “that works of mercy offered for the souls of the dead serve for their deliverance, since it is not in vain that we offer our prayers to God in their behalf?”

In this belief, which has been the belief of the Church in all ages, the Christians of the first centuries were accustomed, on the day of a funeral, to give large sums to the poor. They gave them a feast called the *Agapé* (love-feast), a repast of charity, and alms were then distributed.

St. Paulinus, a contemporary of St. Jerome,* writing to a Roman senator, who was overcome by grief for the loss of his wife, sought to console him by these touching words:

“All that you give to the poor,” said he, “the hand of Jesus Christ will immediately return to you and her, for the voice of the poor finds easy access

* Fourth century.

to the ear of God, and it is written: *'The prayers of the poor pierce the clouds.'* Blessed is your wife, she for whom so many things plead at this moment in presence of Jesus Christ, your merits and hers, the good works which you perform for her soul, and her transmitted virtues."*

Has not our Lord Himself attributed to almsgiving a power in some sort supreme, when He declares that He regards as done for Himself all that is done for love of Him to the least of His little ones; even a cup of cold water given to him who suffers thirst? A cup of cold water! What an encouraging figure of almsgiving, light and easy to all! And is not this poor thirsty one a lively image of a soul relieved from its suffering by our charity?

WE ARE TOO FORGETFUL OF THE DEAD.

"We are too forgetful of our dead, our dear departed," St. Francis de Sales

* *Life of St. Paula*, by M. l'Abbé La Grange, Vicar-General of Orleans.

used to say. "We do not pray enough for their souls. The need of believing in the happiness, the entire deliverance of those whose loss we mourn, makes us love to persuade ourselves that they have passed without transition from earth to heaven, and that our prayers are therefore unnecessary. Thus, when the last struggle is ended, and when the moment of solemn silence which follows the last sigh has given place to the explosion of grief, how often do we hear said around the death-bed, 'At last his suffering is over; he is happy, he is at rest.' And we seek an alleviation of our sorrow in this assurance; and we do not think, alas! that detained, perhaps, in a place of expiation, the poor soul is suffering yet more cruelly than in his painful agony.

"To whom has God revealed the secret of His justice towards that soul? Who has penetrated the counsels of God?"

Enlightened by the light of faith, the saints trembled much more than we do,

for themselves and others. The great bishop, St. Cyprian, on the point of suffering martyrdom, cried out, in laying his head on the block, "Woe is me, who am about to appear at the judgment-seat of God!"

And St. Augustine, long after the death of his admirable mother, still prayed and asked prayers for her. "Lord," he wrote, "inspire Thy servants, who were my brethren, to carry to Thine altar the remembrance of Monica Thy servant, and of Patricius, who was her husband."

To God alone it belongs to judge souls, because He alone knows all the recesses of the heart. He alone penetrates the interior life of the soul. But our judgments of others are often unjust, and more or less rash. Where the eye of man only perceives subjects of edification, or of scandal, the eye of God, it may be, discovers a secret pride which spoils the most beautiful virtues, or hidden circumstances which extenuate the greatest faults. And it must not be

forgotten, that if God has promised to pardon the sinner, if He receives with indulgence the workmen of the last hour, He also declares that He will demand an account of every idle word that men shall speak;* and that He will even “judge justice.”† For “there shall not enter into it anything defiled;”‡ and there remain, even after pardon, some faults to expiate, and a temporal punishment to undergo.

Let us, then, beware of anticipating the divine decrees by our blind judgments. Let us hope in the infinite goodness of God; but, always preserving that sweet confidence which faith authorises for pure lives and Christian deaths, let us pray for our deceased brethren, that, as their lives were, such may have been their deaths. It may happen that our prayers are useless to the soul for which they were offered; they will reach some other poor soul in distress, and when in our turn we shall have need of prayers, those whose de-

* Matt. xii. 36. † Ps. lxxiv. 3. ‡ Apoc. xxi. 27.

liverance we have hastened will interest themselves in our happiness.

Even now, on earth, persevering prayer for the dead will bring forth its fruits in our hearts. It will recall the end of our life, which is to come; it will continue those sweet relations of intimate tenderness; it will preserve venerated memories from forgetfulness,—sad forgetfulness, that great weakness of our nature; and we can say, with St. Ambrose, while mourning a friend: “I loved him, and I will not abandon him, till my prayers have made him enter into the house of the Lord.”

HE PASSED THROUGH DEATH, BUT DID NOT
REMAIN THERE.

(ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.)

My God, how deceitful is this life, and how brief are its consolations! They appear for a moment, and the next moment carries them away. Little by little God detaches us from the joys of this world, and in this way draws us to heaven, by taking thither, one by one,

all who were dear to us here below. We must, then, aspire ardently to the day of immortality, and keep our hearts uplifted towards heaven, where we have now a band of our beloved ones. Ah, if we had our hearts well fixed on that holy and blessed eternity, "Go," we should say to our friends, "go, dear friends, to that eternal Being at the hour appointed for you by the King of eternity. We shall follow you. And since time is given to us only for this purpose, and since the world is only peopled to people heaven, when we go there we do all we have to do."

O God, death is terrible as it is presented to us. For we are told, "Your father is dead," or "Your son is dead;" but this is not the way Christians should speak. We should say, "Your father has gone to his country and ours; and as it was necessary, he passed through death, in which he did not remain."

And we, when shall we go to our country? In a few days, sooner or

later; in a few years we shall follow them on that journey, and the friendships commenced in this world will be renewed, never again to be severed. All our losses and separations are but for a moment. Ah, truly, for so little a thing as that we must have patience.

Let us try, then, to await courageously the hour of our departure, to go where our friends have already gone; and since we have loved them so much, let us persevere in loving them, still doing for the love of them what they desired that we should do, and what they now wish us to do; that is, to moderate our grief, preserving our eyes for a better purpose than tears, and our minds for a more desirable occupation than mourning. And since true friendship loves to please the beloved object, to please them, comfort your mind and raise your courage. Imagine that at their departure they begged you to do so.

DO YOU MOURN THE SEED WHICH YOU HAVE
SOWN IN THE GROUND?

(ST. AUGUSTINE.)*

You grieve at having borne to the grave one whom you loved, and because you hear his voice no more. He was living, and he is dead.

But do you grieve for the seed which you have sown in the ground? If a man were ignorant enough to mourn for the grain which was sown in the field, which was put in the earth and buried beneath the broken sod, and if this man said to himself, "Why do we bury this grain which was with so much trouble reaped, thrashed, and gathered into the barn? We saw it, and its beauty caused us joy; now it has disappeared from our eyes." If he mourned like this, would we not say to him: "Do not grieve, for that grain is certainly no longer in the barn, nor in your hands; but later we shall come to visit this field, and you shall rejoice to see the richness of the

* Ozanam, *Eloquence Chrétienne*.

harvest where you lament the barrenness of the soil. The harvest is seen every year; that of the human race only once at the end of ages." Meanwhile every creature, if we are not deaf, speaks to us of the resurrection. Sleeping and awaking are of every day; the moon disappears and is renewed every month. Why do the leaves on the trees come and go? It is now winter; assuredly these withered trees will blossom again in spring. Will it be the first time, or did you not see it last year? You saw it: autumn gives place to winter, spring gives place to summer. The year begins again at an appointed time; and cannot men, made to the image of God, come to life again?

WHAT ENDS SOON IS ALWAYS SHORT.

(ST. TERESA,)

May the grace of the Holy Ghost be with you, and give you the strength necessary to bear such a loss, such a terrible blow. God, who has permitted it, and God, who loves us more than we

can ever love ourselves, will enlighten you more and more, to make you understand what special graces He grants to those who know and love Him, when He removes them from this life of misery.

The light of faith will not permit us to doubt that this holy soul is now in a place of rest, there receiving the reward of the great trials of her life, and the patience with which she endured them.

And you,—beware of being cast down by the thought that you have yet to pass many long days alone on earth. What ends soon is always short. Say to yourself that the time which yet remains for you to live on earth without that dear companion is, in reality, but a moment; and place yourself in the hands of God, who will make all things turn to your greater good. Reflect that she whom you have lost for the present life is far more helpful to you in the other, where she will pray to God for your children. These poor children grieve very much; but I hope that God will assist them for their mother's sake.

AH! HOW HAPPY WE SHALL BE IF WE ARE
ALL TOGETHER IN HEAVEN.

(FENELON.)

One would be tempted to wish that all good friends might agree to die together on the same day. In losing true friends we lose much. But religion consoles us in teaching that they are not lost to us, and that there is a country which we are every day approaching where we shall all be reunited. "Be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope."* Those who die are, in regard to us, only absent for a little time. Their apparent loss should serve to disgust us with a place where all is lost, and to make us love a place where all is found again. Oh, how happy we shall be if we are one day altogether in heaven, before God, loving only by His love, rejoicing only by His joy, and separating no more from one another. We are happy even now amid our trials, by the assured hope of that happiness.

* 1 Thess. iv. 12.

The hope of this is, even in this life, our greatest good.

“BE NOT SORROWFUL, EVEN AS OTHERS WHO HAVE NO HOPE.”*

(ST. AUGUSTINE.)

The holy apostle warns us “to be not sorrowful over those that sleep,” that is to say, the dead who were dear to us; “even as others who have no hope,”—the hope of the resurrection and of life eternal. For the custom of the holy Scriptures is to call the dead “those who sleep,” *dormientes*; so that, having told us that they are asleep, we may hope to see them one day awake. And we sing again in the psalms, “Cannot he who sleeps awake?”

It is true that the sorrow which we feel on the death of a beloved one is in some sort natural. It is not a simple prejudice with which the horror of death inspires us; it is also much less reason than nature. The love of life is instinctive in man, who was not made to

* 1 Thess. iv. 12.

die, and who would never have been condemned to death but in punishment for his fault.

We must, then, be sad when death takes from us those we love; for, although we know that they do not leave us for ever on this earth, and that we shall soon rejoin them, nevertheless their absence saddens our hearts. But if affliction comes upon us from one side, consolation reaches us from the other; if the infirmity of nature casts us down, faith raises us up; if the condition of humanity plunges us in grief, the promise of God heals us. This is why the apostle, though he does not forbid us to grieve, tells us to "be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope."

Let sorrow be, then, permitted to our affection, but a sorrow which is tempered with hope. Let us weep our dead, but let the joys of faith come promptly to dry our tears; for faithful souls have exchanged their lot for a happier one.

No, we have not lost those who have quitted this earth, which we must soon leave ourselves. We have only sent them before us to a better world, where they shall be all the dearer to us, inasmuch as we shall know them better.

IN HEAVEN WE KNOW OUR OWN.

Yes, certainly we shall know and love each other again in heaven, and this mutual love will make part of the accidental happiness of heaven. This doctrine is sustained and confirmed by the testimony of the greatest bishops of France to the author of an excellent little work entitled *Au Ciel on se Reconnaît*—"We know each other in Heaven,"—which will shed on the hearts of all who read it the balm of Christian hope. Whilst causing us to feel the spiritual bonds which unite us among ourselves, this excellent work will serve to unite us more to our Lord.

Monseigneur Malou, Bishop of Bruges, has written, in answer to a friend, such striking words on this subject, that

we can quote nothing stronger or more capable of throwing a flood of light upon it. "I have just read," said the bishop to his friend, "the work entitled *Au Ciel on se Reconnaît*,—'In Heaven we know our own.' You ask me what I think of it.

"All the works which treat of heaven, of its happiness, of its eternity, give me pleasure, because they are those which in these days do the most good to souls. Formerly we seemed to gain more fruit by speaking of death, judgment, and hell. Fear had then more empire than love. At present love is more powerful in the conversion of hearts. Therefore it is love which must be inspired, to confirm the just and convert sinners.

"The subject treated of in this little work is full of interest. It answers a question which is often put to us by pious persons, 'Shall we know each other in heaven?' Yes, certainly, we shall know and love each other, and this mutual love will form a part of the accidental happiness of heaven. In my

opinion the author is correct, and exaggerates nothing. If he has a fault, it is, perhaps, that of not having sufficiently developed his subject.

“The communion of saints, said I to myself, is continued in that heavenly Jerusalem, the holy Sion, the city of God. But a city has its magistrates and its rulers, as it has its citizens. It supposes, between the persons who compose it, relations of superiority and subordination in the moral order,—relations which do not exist without mutual acquaintance.

“The society of the saints is the family of God; a spiritual family, transported from earth to heaven; a family of which Mary is still the Mother, and distinguishes her beloved children. Now imagine a family the members of which do not know each other. Can the children know their father and mother, without the sisters and brothers having fraternal relations?

“The society of saints forms a celestial hierarchy, in imitation of that of the

angels, if it is not confounded with that one. Now we know that the angels know each other, since the superior orders enlighten and illumine the inferior orders, and all assist each other in praising, blessing, and adoring the thrice Holy God. The blessed all act in like manner; and since the holy angels will know them as those who replace the fallen angels, they will also know the angels, and will know each other reciprocally.

“Besides, is not the Church Militant an imperfect image of the Church Triumphant? If such is the case, the Church Triumphant will preserve in its bosom the seal, if I may thus speak, of the Church Militant; I mean that the order and harmony which reign here below among the children of God, to prepare them for the happiness of heaven, will pass with them to the abode of the elect. Thus the pastors will find themselves in heaven at the head of their flocks; the bishops at the head of the faithful of their diocese; the Sove-

reign Pontiff at the head of the whole Catholic Church ; the patriarchs of religious orders at the head of their spiritual families, of those who have followed their rule, worn their habit, and imitated their example. But this order and harmony will rest on the mutual recognition of persons, and on the relations of moral order, which, without mutual recognition, are impossible.

“The very nature of heavenly beatitude furnishes irrefutable proofs on this subject. This beatitude rests entirely on beatific vision, that is to say, on the intellectual view of the Divinity. And what is the intellectual view, if not knowledge, the action of the mind? The development of the intellect will be, then, in some sort, the measure of the happiness of heaven. Happiness results, it is true, from love; but love itself is necessarily proportioned to the knowledge which we have of the object of our happiness. We do not love what we do not know, and we love infinitely what we know to be

infinitely amiable. The intellect is, then, the faculty with which the blessed seize happiness. And can we suppose the elect to be completely ignorant of all that surrounds them, and which interests them in the highest degree? Can we believe that they enjoy the knowledge of the essence of God, and that in this essence they do not contemplate the joy which the other blessed derive from it?

“This is utterly impossible. The power which their minds have acquired of contemplating the Divinity, the source of all happiness, greatly assists them in knowing those around them, whom the divine essence beatifies and crowns with happiness. They do not only enjoy the rays of light which place them in contact with the Divinity, but the ocean of light which inundates them, and places them in relation with all the felicity of heaven.

“Although the essential happiness of the elect consists in the vision and possession of the divine essence, yet their

beatitude is completed and finished, if I may so speak, by the knowledge which they acquire of the beatitude of the friends of God. In heaven, as on earth, God receives, not only individual homage, but also the collective praises of all His assembled children.

“Moreover, why are there in heaven those aureolæ, or particular signs of virtue and of glory? Why do the martyrs, virgins, confessors, doctors, etc., wear a distinctive mark in the midst of the common radiance, if not to be more easily recognized and glorified by their brethren? Certainly it is not to fix the eye of the Divinity or of the angels that these particular seals of glory and of merit are necessary; it is to attract the gaze of the other elect. The blessed will, then, recognize and distinguish the martyrs from the confessors and virgins, and in recognizing their merits they will also recognize their persons. There is, then, between all the blessed, a succession of mutual relations of admiration, congratulation, ap-

plause, and gratitude, which evidently supposes a clear and direct personal knowledge.

“Nor is this all. We believe in the resurrection of the body. This is not actually necessary that the elect may recognize each other. Souls stripped of their bodies assume intellectual forms, which the intellect, freed from the flesh, can perceive, distinguish, and know. It is, however, certain that the reunion of the body and the soul, which constitutes terrestrial individuality, destroyed by death, is a powerful means of distinguishing the elect from one another; and though the resurrection of the flesh has other sublime ends, it is permitted us to believe that it will also contribute, in part, to facilitate for the blessed the knowledge which they possess of their relatives, friends, and benefactors.

“In this respect the dogma of the invocation of saints also furnishes us with light.

“The apostle St. Peter wrote to the faithful whom he had converted, that he

would remember them after his death. Those faithful had, then, a particular right to invoke him after his death. This right we have, in a certain measure, with regard to all the saints, but especially with regard to those saints whose name we bear, or who by any other title have become our particular patrons. When we have reached heaven, the saints whom we knew on earth will know us still. What do I say? The saints who reign in heaven for centuries, the holy martyrs who have shed their blood in the first ages of the Church, long before our birth, will know us, and love us in Jesus Christ. We invoke them with confidence and with success.

“But if the elect do not know each other in heaven, those blessed patrons who have watched over us while on earth must lose sight of us when we ascend to heaven, and cease to interest themselves in our welfare. Now this is impossible. Far from being broken, when we ascend to heaven the bonds which unite us to the saints are strengthened and drawn

closer. Faith and hope then cease, but charity always remains. The saints who knew us on earth know us still when we reach heaven; and as this prerogative is essentially common to all the elect, all the elect mutually know each other for all eternity.

“ Finally, if the blessed do not know each other, what idea can we have of the happiness of heaven? We should then necessarily imagine a multitude of beings isolated from one another, without reciprocal action or relation, motionless, absorbed in unchangeable contemplation, and in some sort materialized. The mind and heart of the elect would be absorbed, I grant, in the knowledge and love of the divine nature; but collectively they would form neither a society of friends, nor the spiritual family, nor the city of God. Heaven would be no longer an abode of bliss, where all the faculties of the reasoning soul have a proper action, concurring with the happiness of that soul and the happiness of the other elect; but it

would become, if I may use the expression, a species of cellular prison, where souls, captivated by the essential happiness of the beatific vision, would not know what was passing around them, and would live in a sort of aimless isolation. Let us, then, hold to the image of the society of saints, where charity reigns supreme; to that of the family of Jesus and Mary, all the members of which know and love each other; to that of the kingdom of God, where all passes in order and harmony, for the greater good of all.

“These ideas, and many others besides, occurred to me whilst I read the little work by Rev. Father Blot. I conclude that it is to him I owe them. I thank him very sincerely for having suggested them to me, and I refer them to him as a debt of gratitude. May his excellent work shed the balm of Christian hope on many afflicted souls, and whilst making us feel the spiritual bonds which unite us among ourselves, unite us all the more in the Lord.

After these lines it is unnecessary for me to say that I approve of his work, and that I desire to see it spread throughout my diocese. The thing speaks for itself."

"In heaven we know our own." This truth is well adapted to console a great number of afflicted souls, who, having tasted here below the happiness of loving certain dear persons, can hardly conceive being happy away from them. Doubtless God would still suffice; but the sensible parts of our souls can scarcely raise themselves to this high truth; and if the knowledge that we shall have of one another in heaven does not add to our essential happiness in the bosom of God, the hope of this knowledge adds immensely to our consolation on earth.

St. Augustine wrote to a widow: "We have not lost those who depart from a world from which we must depart ourselves, but we have sent them before us to that other life where they will be so much dearer to us, because

we shall know them so much better. *Ubi nobis erunt quanto notiores tanto utique cariores.* Your husband knows himself better than you know him. You saw his face better, but he saw his heart better. Now, when the Lord shall come He will throw light on what was wrapped in darkness, and will manifest the thoughts of the heart. Then nothing in one neighbour shall be hidden from the other, and no one shall have any distinction to make between his own and strangers, to reveal a thing to the former, and keep it secret from the latter, because there will be no more strangers. But what will be the nature, what the intensity of the light which shall thus illumine all that one heart now encloses in darkness? Who can tell? Who can even conceive?

The angelic doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, teaches that the blessed love one another all the more, because they are more united with God. While on earth we love each other more or less, according as we are more or less united

amongst ourselves by the different ties which are necessary or permitted. Yet, although in heaven we may have no longer to provide for each other's wants, each one will retain a special affection for those to whom he was united, and will continue to love them in many ways, because of their relationship, friendship, alliance, benefits conferred or received, being of the same country, or the same vocation. For the motives of an honest predilection will not cease to act on the hearts of the blessed. *Non enim cessabunt ab animo beati honestæ dilectionis causæ.*"

SORROW AND RESIGNATION OF A MOTHER
WHO WEEPS FOR THE DEATH OF HER
CHILD.

"Since I lost my daughter I have not ceased to weep, to pray, and to lament. My daughter was my joy, my pride, and my hope; to think of her is now my life. Sometimes I see her, smiling and affectionate, and I give myself up to the joy of seeing her again, but that does

not last long; my sorrow begins anew with the void which is around me.

“Where is she? In heaven, doubtless, enjoying the vision of God. She is clothed with splendour and with beauty. She prays for me, she calls me.

“Ah, my daughter, why must I remain on earth? How I wish to die that I may share your happiness! I feel so sorrowful away from you that I long to break my bonds; to fly from this world, which is horrible to me; to mingle with the blessed, and see you again.

“And yet, why do I grieve that you have been taken from me? Have I a right to reproach God for having spared you the ills of this life, and transported you from your cradle, when you were perhaps threatened with many sufferings, to place you in an abode of unchangeable peace and joy? It is true you are no longer mine, I have lost you. Ah, it is your mother who is most unhappy.

“Sometimes I forget your happiness.

My eyes are wet with tears. I complain; I reproach God for having snatched you from my love. I should rejoice, or, at least, be resigned; for a mother should know how to suffer, and pay the price of her tears for the happiness which her child enjoys.

“Lord, Thou dost possess my treasure. Keep it near Thee. In exchange grant me fortitude. My daughter will perhaps be the cause of my soul’s salvation, since henceforth my thoughts, my desires, and my affections, shall be directed towards heaven, since Thou hast promised to console those who weep.”

THE MYSTERY OF SORROW IMPOSED ON MOTHERS.

Man is condemned to sorrow, and his efforts cannot triumph over it. Intelligence and energetic perseverance may indeed repay his ambition with success: they do not secure his happiness. Skill, strength, and labour may succeed in commanding fortune, in paying for

pleasures, and in gaining crowns; but neither fortune, nor pleasures, nor glory, can escape some strokes of misfortune. It pursues them everywhere, and always reaches them. We can say of it what the French poet said of death:

**"The guard who watches at the gate of the Louvre
Cannot defend our kings from it."**

However, we rejoice when we look on the world, and silently listen to the groans of its sorrows. Enumerate the sufferings to which men are condemned: you will be convinced that life, alas! has but few joys, whilst it is full of bitterness. When the child comes on earth, its first cry is one of distress. By how many others will that be followed? Sometimes sickness seizes upon him, and will perhaps never leave him. According as he grows, his sadness increases, and the source of tears becomes yet more bitter. How many griefs will pass over his head before it is bent by the weight of years?

In time he becomes a man. He

promised himself at that age happiness and prosperity, but adversity has only grown. Soon, perhaps, he will find his body stricken with some sickness which enchains and tortures him;—for the diseases to which we are exposed are innumerable, they are springing up anew at every instant, and death is truly but the end of a long torment. Behold, here is the father or the mother of a family toiling painfully to earn bread for their children; there, are deserted children; here, homeless old men. Ah, let us rather cast a veil over so much misfortune, and turn away our eyes.

Man suffers in mind by cares and anxieties; he bears injuries, he meditates them against his fellow-beings. Envy, hatred, vengeance, implacable enemies who cast yourselves on humanity, are you not for it the cause of bitter sorrows?

Yes; but there is yet worse. The privations and torments of hunger, bloodshed, and the shafts of hatred, are

less bitter than the pains which rend the heart. A simple and confiding, but affectionate and devoted heart, when betrayed in its affections, when overwhelmed by the misfortune of those whom it loves, reaches the last degree of the woes we can suffer.

Now, amongst all those who bear this heavy burden, the mother of a family is most overladen; for it is she, above all, who, with her own sorrows, bears besides the afflictions and sorrows of her children; she suffers with them more than they do; if she outlives some, devoting and sacrificing herself for those who remain, she sometimes receives only ingratitude and neglect. Her life will end, as it began, with an increase of sorrow. However, God cannot quite abandon her, and the consolations which He prepares for her will sometimes be powerful enough to change her sorrows into joys, and it will be those which she will derive, not from reason, but from faith and religion.

If a mother had only reason to aid

her in struggling against adversity, she would be vanquished, for reason will never understand the mystery of sorrow. She receives it with hatred and indignation, curses the hand that strikes, accuses destiny, and abandons herself to despair and blasphemy. But faith, hope, and charity, which come from God, bringing with them consoling and fortifying thoughts, revive the fainting Christian mother.

It is God who sends it to us, they say, to help us to suffer, and to promise in His name the rewards of heaven. At these words the soul returns to life, and is revived, like nature awaking at the breath of spring. These three great virtues here come successively to fulfil their office in revealing to mothers the mystery of sorrow.

FAITH.

God, who created all things, the earth and the heavens, animals and men, should derive glory from all this multitude of beings, who are the work of His

hands. They ought to render to Him, each in its own way, obedience, adoration, and love. Faithful to this holy law, the whole world praises and adores its Creator. "The heavens," says the prophet, "show forth the glory of God."* But the adoration of which God is most jealous is that which comes from the heart of man; for the least feeling, the slightest palpitation of the heart, honours Him more than the harmony of worlds. But yet man, in his independence, often refuses Him the love which He expects. Where are the real servants of God,—where His devoted subjects? Alas! I seek them, and I find but very few. Man worships himself instead of worshipping his Author.

Success and happiness too often make men egotistical, and destroy the love of God in their souls. Do you know a family favoured by constant prosperity? The happy mother has children who form her hope and her pride; wealth abounds; in a word, every-

* Ps. xviii. 1.

thing smiles on her. But she does not think of thanking God, from whom all her happiness comes. What! a soul so beautiful in the eyes of God, a heart so precious, created to love the Lord,—shall they be always plunged in the egotism of joy? Does this woman exist, then, only for herself and her children? But her Father in heaven, her eternity? God is about to enter into possession of what belongs to Him. Will it be by exciting her gratitude by new benefits? He would only be the more completely forgotten. She would thank fortune for its favours, and would persist in indifference.

Then God calls to Him envy, hate, vengeance, sickness, and death,—all the enemies of man. “Go,” He tells them, “do your worst in that family from which I am exiled. I give up to you that mother who disregards My love and My benefits.” And on the morrow joy flies from beneath that roof, hitherto so favoured. All evils then come up together. I have seen the poor mother

calumniated; I have seen her at the bedside of her most loved child. But returning a few days after, I found the bed empty; death had stricken its victim. But if joy has fled, faith has entered their hearts.

Broken by sorrow, that mother remembered God; she acknowledged her indifference, and raising her eyes to heaven, she asked pardon, weeping at the foot of the altar. Sorrow had brought back to the Lord a soul that prosperity had snatched from Him. Blessed be affliction when it leads to such splendid triumphs. Henceforth an affliction will be a warning, a salutary trial; it will open the eyes of Christian mothers to the illusions of the world, detach their hearts from perishable joys, and remind them of their eternal destiny.

God thus regains, by momentarily subjecting them to the strokes of misfortune, some souls who were forgetting Him, and thus losing, by their indifference, the merits of their works.

But does He strike only these? Does

He not seem, on the contrary, to lean with a still heavier hand on those who love and are devoted to Him? No doubt He does; but let us ask of faith the revelation of this new mystery.

Certain chosen souls, endowed with singular graces, find a great joy in the service of God. The inclination of their minds, the wants of their hearts, lead them toward Him without effort. In such cases the merit loses its extent. If Christians were always on Thabor, the Saviour would not recognize them as His disciples.

It is in the way of Calvary, at the foot of the cross, that He is pleased to meet them, and say to them, "I have called you friends."* A Christian mother, faithful to her duties because they are sweet to her, has not so much right to count herself amongst the disciples of the Crucified; yet God will not leave unrewarded the aspirations of so fair a soul. He immediately sends her crosses, treasures reserved for those He

* John xv. 15.

loves. When she has been plunged in sorrow, when she has been bruised, and when there only remains a victim purified by suffering, she can rejoice. God has remembered her, and associated her with the saints and martyrs, with all who during this life, understanding the price of self-sacrifice, hastened to meet it, and received it as a benefit. This woman will take her place amongst those generous souls who crucify their bodies and minds, and seek humiliations and poverty, understanding that these are the pledges of celestial happiness.

Suffering is an essential element of life, which it purifies and elevates ; it is an immense grace. The angel Raphael said to Tobias: "Because thou wast acceptable to God it was necessary that temptation should prove thee."*

To suffer is, then, to accomplish the law of our being, and to please the Lord. These words are harsh, and all cannot comprehend them. Hear those who exclaim against the justice of God, and

* Tobias xv. 13.

who seem to doubt it, because they have not seen the heroism and virtue of an afflicted mother rewarded. "She could pour oil and wine on the wounds of those who suffer," they say; "she prayed with fervour; she distributed her alms and charities amongst the poor and the unfortunate; and yet God afflicts her, and seems not to accept her virtues. One would say that He is indifferent to her affliction, whilst the wicked and the impious abound in prosperity and pleasure." Fools! do you not know that that woman has been found worthy of sharing in the sufferings of the Son of God, that she has received a soul powerful enough to raise itself where so many would fail? You are astonished at these contradictions, and you cry out in your ignorance, "Of what avail are her sacrifices, her charity, and her religion, when God seems to reject her?" But your gaze goes no farther than the horizon of this world, and does not penetrate the secrets of eternity. Virtue tried will one day be virtue triumphant.

God will Himself console the mother who has wept much; the angels will proclaim her glory, and, relating her struggles, will place a crown on her brow. Happy ones of earth! you will weep while she is rejoicing, and you will understand, but too late, the value of tears and sorrow.

To say that suffering surpasses the strength and energy of a soul is to doubt the goodness and wisdom of God, who never sends affliction without sending with it the courage necessary to bear it.

O, afflicted mothers, there is a model whom you should imitate in your hours of bitterness. It is the sweet Jesus, who became man to save the world, and give it an example of virtue.

When you suffer, contemplate Him in His poor crib at Bethlehem; accompany Him in His flight into Egypt; into the poor humble house at Nazareth; join the holy women who followed Him to Calvary. This spectacle will be so sweet and strengthening, that, with the help of grace, sorrow will for you be

clothed with delight ; its strokes will be less rude, its wounds less painful, and you will exclaim, "I thank Thee, O Lord."

This first cry of resignation will not be without an echo in His Heart. You will hear Him telling you : "My child, I came down from heaven to teach you patience in your miseries ; I was the Man of Sorrows, and whoever aspires to My glory must accept the cross which I offer him. Accept it, then, and die upon it.

"How I love these generous souls, and how much dearer they are to Me than those who serve Me without opposition and without a struggle ! Sufferings honour Me more than the science of the doctors, or the preaching of missionaries, for it is in consideration of these generous, suffering souls that I bless the words of the former, and that I save nations."

These relations are well adapted to restore peace and fortitude. Ah, how happy are those whom faith enlightens and consoles.

HOPE.

In condemning man to sorrow God has not permitted that he should be deprived of hope, nor that he should fall beneath its blows. The first man, when expelled from the terrestrial paradise, received from the lips of his Creator a consoling promise; and hope, reviving in his soul, showed him in the future his posterity regenerated by the Redemption.

When the devil asked permission to persecute Job, God, wishing to show forth the faith of His servant, whilst forbidding the spirit of evil to touch his body, gave him up to him; and that holy man, who in one day lost his children and his goods, seeing himself deserted and despised by his friends, found courage, in reflecting on the dissolution of his body, to sing the glory of its resurrection. Whence came to him this confidence, in which he persevered, notwithstanding so many misfortunes? From hope.

Hope keeps up life by promising it a little happiness; it invites the young mother to renounce her pleasures, by giving her a glimpse of days beautified by the gratitude of her children. Hope is the support of the exile, and the consolation of the poor.

Yet does it not seem sometimes to mislead the confidence of man? When does it realize its promises? Alas! where are they whom it has not seduced? Have we not ourselves been often disappointed in our expectations? And yet, in spite of the hardest trials, the Christian never ceases to hope, because his hope comes from God. It is true that its principal promises are realized only in heaven. It is, therefore, to heaven that afflicted mothers should turn their eyes; it is there that they should contemplate their future crown, and tremble with happiness at the thought of the rest and joy which there await them; for in heaven the sight of God alone will console them for a whole life of adversity.

St. Paul had caught a glimpse of that spectacle when he cried out, "Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."* The saints, in fact, struggled on earth, and now they are sheltered from all fear, and rest in happiness.

The suffering mother belongs to God, and is a sacred being. On her brow shines a gentle radiance. The Church honours, loves, and respects her. It seems as if the Saviour were hidden under her features, and that she is already illumined by celestial light.

At the foot of the cross hope gushes forth, to flow over the earth, and console the unhappy. Before the mystery of the cross adversity was regarded as a curse, and those whom it had chosen for its victims were everywhere repulsed.

The Jews did not understand that suffering is a manifestation of God. "Rachel," says the prophet, "will not be comforted for the death of her chil-

* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

dren, because they are not." A Christian mother will be comforted, because she is a Christian. She knows the value of bitterness and its reward. She resigns herself heroically, and cries out with the apostle, that "to die is gain,"* because death opens heaven.

Do you know a poor woman who labours painfully to support her numerous family? She does not complain if sickness attacks one of her children. She deprives herself of bread without a murmur, she smiles in the midst of anxiety and troubles, and if you ask her the secret of this unchangeable peace, she will tell you: "It is my hope in God that sustains me and keeps me alive. Thus far He has not abandoned me; how, then, can I think that He will ever abandon me?"

Oh, how sweet a thing is hope!

The following anecdote will further reveal its sweetness:—

"It was a winter night. The wind

* Phil. i. 21.

whistled without, and the snow whitened the roofs.

“Under one of these roofs, in a small room, a white-haired woman and a young girl sat working.

“From time to time the poor woman warmed her thin hands at a small stove. The poor dwelling was lit by a lamp, and a ray from this lamp fell on a picture of the Virgin which hung on the wall.

“The young girl, raising her eyes, looked silently for some moments at the elder woman, then she said, ‘Mother, you have not always been in such destitution.’

“Her voice was inexpressibly sweet and tender.

“The mother answered, ‘My daughter, God is master; whatever He does is well done.’

“Having said these words, she was silent for a moment. Then she spoke again :

“‘When I lost your father my grief was inconsolable; yet you were left me.

But I felt only one thing then. I have since thought that if he were living, and could see us in this distress, his heart would break; and I acknowledged how good God had been to him.'

"The young girl made no answer, but she bent her head, and tears, which she sought to hide, fell on the linen which she held in her hands.

"The mother continued: 'God, who was so good to him, has also been good to us. For what have we wanted, when so many others are in want of all?'

"'It is true that we are obliged to accustom ourselves to little, and to gain that little by our work; but does not that little suffice, and has not every one from the beginning been condemned to live by their own labour?'

"'God, in His mercy, has given us our daily bread: and how many have not even that? a shelter, and how many know not where to go? He has given you to me, my daughter—to me; and why should I complain?'

"Moved by these last words, the

young girl knelt at her mother's feet, took her hands, and kissing them, she leaned on her breast, weeping,

“And the mother, speaking with an effort, said, ‘My daughter, happiness is not in possessing much, but in hoping and loving much. Our hope is not here below, and neither is our love, or, if it is, only in passing.’

“‘After God you are my all in this world; but this world vanishes like a dream, and this is why love rises with you towards another world. Before you were born, one day I prayed very fervently to the Blessed Virgin. She appeared to me in my sleep, and with a heavenly smile seemed to offer me a child, and I took the child, and while holding it in my arms the Virgin Mother placed upon its head a crown of white roses. After a few months you were born, and that sweet vision has always been before my eyes.’

“Saying this, the old woman, trembling with joy, pressed her daughter to her heart.

“Some time after this a holy soul saw two luminous forms ascending to heaven; a troop of angels accompanied them, and the air resounded with their hymns of joy.”

“Seek true peace, not upon earth,” says the *Imitation of Christ*, “not in men, not in other creatures, but in God alone.”

Have a little patience, then; this exile will end, and the heaven that you hope for will be yours. What matter the hardships of the present, since heaven will never end?

CHARITY.

Through the inspirations of faith and hope, sorrow has lost some of its bitterness, but that does not suffice; God calls *those who weep blessed*.

Sorrow has charms which change it into joy, and it is charity which gives them.

Is love, then, that attachment produced in the heart by the attraction of pleasure, the hope of gratitude, or by

some interested motive? No; that attachment is but the inspiration of egotism, which, to justify itself, borrows that beautiful name.

If there is a human feeling which best deserves the name of love, it is that which a mother feels for her children. It is neither interest nor pleasure which inspires it, but devotion and sacrifice. Now, does not this sentiment seem condemned to continual afflictions, and do we not judge of its greatness by their number and severity? It is said that the more a mother suffers for her children, the more she has done as a proof of her love for them.

Love is suffering. Even when that generous mother has been repaid by filial gratitude, when she has been the happiest of mothers, her love does not the less possess that character which constitutes its nature. Did she not suffer at the moment when her children were born? Have not their maladies tortured her as well as themselves? Have not their pains been hers? Does

she not live in continual fear lest misfortune should come upon them ?

Yes; to love is to suffer.

Our feelings, when they have God for their object, are produced in the same manner as when they relate to men, yet with this difference, that they are rendered supernatural by grace. He who loves God cannot better manifest his love than by resignation in suffering; it is the most perfect proof of it that he can give.

That which assures us of the truth of this doctrine is the example of God Himself. "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son."* The Saviour is called by the prophet the Man of Sorrows; and whoever studies His life cannot refrain from tears when reflecting on all that He suffered. It was love which laid Him in the crib at Bethlehem, and which led Him even to Calvary; it was love that fastened Him to the cross and made Him die upon it. Ah! had we no other proof to assure

* John iii. 16.

us that the expression of charity is suffering, the spectacle of a crucified God would suffice. Besides, the souls who have most loved God, and whom He Himself preferred, have been the most afflicted. Mary, who was the object of divine predilection,—what a life was hers also! What anguish, what sorrow, what suffering weighed upon her! What tears did she shed! Her constancy was never shaken in spite of all these struggles; she never ceased to repeat to God, by her patience and resignation, “My God, I love Thee!”

Consider those who for eighteen centuries throng the road to Calvary, and follow Jesus, carrying their cross. You would be terrified by the prodigies of suffering invented by love, eager to sacrifice itself, to die for and with Jesus Christ. Their united tears would make torrents, and their blood would form rivers. Ah! all the saints have suffered much, because they have loved much.

A mother animated by charity will follow no other path. If God does not

demand of her extraordinary works of piety, it is because He knows that they do not belong to her. He often deprives her of that spiritual satisfaction which consoles and fortifies the heart; and she will find in these sacrifices the occasion of making amends for many weaknesses. God fears to be forgotten while she gives herself up ardently to the accomplishment of her natural duties, and that her soul may slumber amidst her many earthly cares; but He will make life come forth from the midst of death.

O Christian mothers! you know not what purifies your soul. It is charity. By your perpetual resignation you say to God that you love Him. You are calumniated, insulted: look on the cross and thank Him. Misfortune and adversity assail you on every side: take shelter in the stable at Bethlehem. Your children are stricken by death: look at Jesus in the arms of His Mother, and say, "My God, Thou art just and merciful." If you cannot speak, be like the

victim bending under the sword of the executioner.

"Yet more, yet more," cried out a great soul.

Blessed trials! oh, you cannot deceive! God has filled the cup of adversity to overflowing. Mothers who love ever bless the Lord, and would bless Him even when all miseries are showered upon them.

During our Saviour's agony an angel came down from heaven to revive His strength: and yet Jesus, who had dreaded the chalice of bitterness, accepted it with submission, saying, "Father, not My will, but Thine be done."

The angel of Gethsemane represented all those who in future ages were to be associated in the sufferings of Jesus. The Saviour Himself saw them around Him, and their generous participation consoled His Heart; for it is always a consolation in sorrow to meet with compassion and love.

Those mothers who are submissive to the severity of God's decrees unite

themselves to the agony of the Redeemer, and are counted amongst those elect souls who reproduce and continue His Passion.

I considered the eyes of mothers, and perceiving them bathed in tears, I wondered to see that they, whose life is a continual sacrifice, appear to be forsaken and abandoned to suffering. And my heart was softened, and I complained to God. "Lord," said I, "why have tears been imposed upon them?" And the Lord answered me: "Purifying tears are the proofs of charity, and the sign of predestination." And I understand this language. Yes, tears are a gift of God. Far from embittering, they refresh the heart, since those who often weep never cease their love and devotion. Yes, tears deprive suffering of its bitterness and harshness. The oppressed heart once more breathes freely when tears flow from the eyes. Tears, "the blood of the soul," as says St. Augustine, often reveal the presence of grace in the heart, and are accompanied by divine

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consolation. They are a mute prayer, a silent and tender offering, which associates us with the sorrow and with the merits of Jesus Christ and His saints.

Oh! who can tell the power of tears? Nothing can resist them. They are the strength of the weak and the treasure of the indigent. How true are those words of the Lord: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

It is enough; faith, hope, and charity have prevailed. The Catholic Church offers to mothers the sweetest consolation, and gives them as much joy as it is possible to find in this life.

CONSOLATION IN SUFFERING.

To be born, to suffer, and to die,—such is the history of every man who comes into this world. What, alas! is our life upon earth? Continual suffering. You suffer a long time, afflicted soul; you groan under the weight of your afflictions; griefs spring up in your path; you walk a road sown with crosses; your daily bread is steeped in

tears; you count your days by your sorrows; your relations desert you, your friends betray you; your projects fail; your days pass in sadness and in mourning; every moment the torrent of bitterness which overwhelms you increases; you seem to be in the world only to suffer. I hear the voice of your sighs and complaints. I take part in your pains, I am touched by your sorrows, I pity you. Yet I do not pity you precisely because you suffer, but because you know not how to profit by your sufferings, by recalling to your mind the great motives of consolation which your religion presents to you. Reflect on it. You weep over your afflictions; alas! have you wept for your sins?

You suffer and you complain. Consider what a God has suffered for you; and at the sight of His cross, His blood, and His sorrows, see if you have a right to complain.

You have sinned, and by your sins you have deserved hell. If God had taken you from this world at a certain

time, would you not now be plunged in eternal fire? And yet you murmur at some passing affliction.

You suffer: and have not the saints suffered? Are your trials to be compared to their sacrifices? Like them, you desire to be holy, but you would wish to suffer nothing with them to become so.

You suffer. By your suffering you can expiate your sins, draw down the mercy of God, deserve heaven; therefore are not your sufferings most precious graces in the sight of God? Is there any other road to heaven than that of the cross?

You suffer, and you are anxious; you complain, you are tempted to murmur. But does your anxiety lessen your sufferings? Do you not see that you make them worse, by losing the merit of them before God, making yourself so much less worthy of His grace and assistance; perhaps even drawing down on yourself new trials and afflictions?

In short, you suffer. But would you

have nothing to place at the foot of our Saviour's cross? You find His blood there: is it too much to mingle your tears with it?

Sinful and guilty man! Let us go back to the source of the evil; let us enter into ourselves, and see what we deserve before God; acknowledging that if we suffer it is our sins which have caused our sufferings; and far from breaking forth in murmurs, far from accusing heaven of harshness, or our fellow-creatures of injustice, let us blame ourselves and our sins. This is the fatal torch which has enkindled the wrath of God and the fire of His vengeance. This is the deadly poison which produces affliction in souls, bitterness in hearts, desolation in families, ruin in provinces, decay in empires. God has established a tribunal of vengeance on earth, whence He exercises His dreadful judgments on sinful man, whether it be to punish disorders, to put an end to scandals, or to bring back sinners to the observance of His law.

Let us open our eyes to our misfortunes, and far from imputing them, like the pagans, to our hard fate, or to the malice of our enemies, or to I know not what fatality, which we call our evil star, let us go farther, let us find the beginning of the evil,—the arm of God justly incensed against us. We had sinned, and He afflicted us; we had abandoned His law, and He abandoned us to our miseries; we had despised His mercy, and He gave us up to the rigours of His justice. Perhaps our miseries increase because our iniquities are multiplied; perhaps we become more unhappy every day because every day we become more guilty. The scourges of God are not ended; nor His treasures, nor His anger exhausted: "His hand is stretched out still."* Do we wish our miseries to cease? then let us renounce our sins, deplore our iniquities, humble ourselves under the hand of God, kiss the hand that strikes us. Then the anger of the avenging God will be

* Isaias v. 25.

calmed, and the dark clouds, which foretold thunder and lightning to destroy us, will dissolve into a sweet and sanctifying dew. What is most consoling for us is, that as our sins have caused our sufferings, our sufferings will serve to expiate our sins, will contribute to our salvation, and will procure for us one day the reward promised to suffering souls: *Beati qui lugent*.

These are the sentiments in which we should receive our sufferings if we are Christians.

With sentiments of penance! We are sinners; we are, then, happy in having a means of expiating our sins in this world, rather than in having to undergo eternal pains.

With sentiments of patience! God wills it; these words say all. God wills it or permits it; in vain do we complain or murmur; can we ever screen ourselves from the almighty hand of God?

With sentiments of confidence! God afflicts us for our good; He will sustain and console us, He will sanctify us in

our sufferings, and through our sufferings. God has suffered with joy for our sins; let us suffer with joy for His love. What we sow to-day in tears we shall one day reap in joy, and an eternity of happiness and of glory will be the reward of a few years of trial and of combat.

Let us reflect on this, and console ourselves in all our troubles; our sins deserve yet more than we suffer.

BOOK III.

A VOTIVE MASS FOR THE SICK.

INTROIT. *Ps.* liv. Hear, O God, my prayer, and despise not my supplication: be attentive to me, and hear me. *Ps.* I am grieved in my exercise; and am troubled at the voice of the enemy, and at the tribulation of the sinner. V. Glory.

COLL. O almighty and everlasting God, the eternal salvation of them that believe in Thee: hear us in behalf of Thy servants who are sick, for whom we humbly crave the help of Thy mercy, that their health being restored to them, they may render thanks to Thee in Thy Church. Through.

If the sick person be near the point of death:

COLL. O almighty and merciful God, who hast prepared for mankind the

means of salvation, and the rewards of eternal life: look down, in Thy mercy, on Thy servant now labouring under the calamity of sickness, and be Thou the comfort of his soul, which Thou hast created; that, at the hour of death, it may be presented to Thee, by the hands of the angels, without spot. Through,

EPISTLE. *James v. 13, 16. Brethren*: Is any of you sad? Let him pray. Is he cheerful in mind? Let him sing psalms. Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess therefore your sins one to another: and pray one for another, that you may be saved.

GRAD. *Ps. vi. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, O Lord. V. All my bones are troubled, and my soul is troubled exceedingly. Alleluia, Alleluia. V. Hear, O Lord,*

my prayer, and let my cry come to Thee. *Alleluia.*

After Septuagesima, instead of the *Alleluia* and *V.*,
is said :

TRACT. *Ps.* xxx. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am afflicted: my eye is troubled with wrath, my soul, and my belly. *V.* For my life is wasted with grief; and my years in sighs. *V.* My strength is weakened through poverty, and my bones are disturbed.

In Paschal time the *Gradual* is omitted, and the following is said :

Alleluia, Alleluia. Hear, O Lord, my prayer, and let my cry come to Thee. *Alleluia.* In God hath my heart confided, and I have been helped. And my flesh hath flourished again, and with my will I will give praise to Him. *Alleluia.*

GOSPEL. *Matt.* viii. 5, 15. And when He had entered into Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him: I will come and heal him. And

the centurion making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And when Jesus heard this, He marvelled, and said to them that followed Him: Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion, Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.

OFFERT. *Ps.* liv. Hear, O God, my

prayer, and despise not my supplication: be attentive to me, and hear me.

SECRET. O God, by whose pleasure the moments of our life are numbered: receive the prayers and sacrifices of Thy servants, for whom, in their sickness, we implore Thy mercy; that we may rejoice in the health of those whom we now apprehend to be in danger. Through.

If the sick person be near the point of death.

SECRET. Receive, O Lord, the sacrifice we offer for Thy servant, who is near the end of his life: and grant, that by it all his sins may be cleansed away, that he who is chastised by Thy appointment in this life, may obtain eternal rest in that which is to come. Through.

COMM. *Ps. xxx.* Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant, save me in Thy mercy: let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon Thee.

P. COMM. *Deus infirmitatis.* O Lord, the singular aid of human weakness, show the power of Thy help to Thy

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sick servant: that being assisted by Thy mercy, he may come in health again to Thy holy Church. Through.

If the sick person be near the point of death.

P. COMM. *Quæsumus.* We beseech Thy mercy, O Almighty God, that Thou wouldst please to strengthen with Thy grace Thy servant by the efficacy of these mysteries, that the enemy may not prevail against him at the hour of his death, but that he may pass to eternal life with Thy angels. Through.

LITANY FOR A HAPPY DEATH.

(FROM THE RACCOLTA.)

Indulgences: 100 days once a day. Plenary, with the usual conditions, and applicable to the dead, once a month, for those who have recited this Litany daily during the month.

O Lord Jesus, God of goodness, and Father of mercies, I draw nigh to Thee with a contrite and humble heart: to Thee I recommend the last hour of my

life, and that judgment which awaits me afterwards, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my feet, benumbed with death, shall admonish me that my course in this life is drawing to an end, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my hands, cold and trembling, shall no longer be able to clasp the crucifix, and shall let it fall against my will on my bed of suffering, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my eyes, dim with trouble at the approach of death, shall fix themselves on Thee, my last and only support, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my lips, cold and trembling, pronounce for the last time Thy adorable name, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my face, pale and livid, shall inspire the beholders with pity and dismay; when my hair, bathed in the sweat of death, and stiffening on my head, shall forebode my approaching end, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my ears, soon to be for ever

shut to the discourse of men, shall be open to that irrevocable decree which is to fix my doom for all eternity, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my imagination, agitated by dreadful spectres, shall be sunk in an abyss of anguish; when my soul, affrighted with the sight of my iniquities and the terrors of Thy judgments, shall have to fight against the angel of darkness, who will endeavour to conceal from my eyes Thy mercies, and to plunge me into despair, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my poor heart, oppressed with suffering, and exhausted by its continual struggles with the enemies of its salvation, shall feel the pangs of death, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When the last tear, the forerunner of my dissolution, shall drop from my eyes, receive it as a sacrifice of expiation for my sins; grant that I may expire the victim of penance; and in that dreadful moment, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my friends and relations, encircling my bed, shall be moved with compassion for me, and invoke Thy clemency in my behalf, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When I shall have lost the use of my senses, when the world shall have vanished from my sight, when my agonizing soul shall feel the sorrows of death, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my last sighs shall force my soul to issue from my body, accept them as the children of a loving impatience to come to Thee, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When my soul, trembling on my lips, shall bid adieu to the world, and leave my body lifeless, pale, and cold, receive this separation as a homage which I willingly pay to Thy Divine Majesty, and in that last moment of my mortal life, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

When at length my soul, admitted to Thy presence, shall first behold the splendour of Thy majesty, reject me not, but receive me into Thy bosom, where I

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may for ever sing Thy praises; and in that moment when eternity shall begin to me, *Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me.*

Let us pray.

O God, who hast doomed all men to die, but hast concealed from all the hour of their death; grant that I may pass my days in the practice of holiness and justice, and that I may be made worthy to quit this world in the peace of a good conscience, and in the embrace of Thy love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SUDDEN DEATH.

100 days' Indulgence each time they are said.

1. Hear us, O God of our salvation, and issue not the decree for the completion of our days before Thou forgivest us our sins; and because penance avails not in hell, and there is no room for

amendment in the pit, therefore we humbly pray and beseech Thee here on earth, that giving us time to pray for pardon, Thou wouldst give us also forgiveness of our sins. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

2. Take away, merciful Lord, all errors from Thy faithful people, avert from them the sudden destruction of the wasting pestilence; and those whose wanderings Thou dost justly chastise, do Thou mercifully pity when corrected. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. Sin no longer, O my soul; think upon the sudden change from sin to endless torments. There, in hell, penance is not accepted, and tears profit not. Turn, then, whilst thou hast time; cry out and say, Have mercy upon me, O my God.

4. In the midst of life we are in death; but to whom can we look to be our helper save Thee, O Lord, who art justly angry with us because of our sins? O holy God, holy and strong, holy and

merciful Saviour, deliver us not over to a bitter death.

5. V. Lest, overtaken by the day of death, we seek time for penance, and be unable to find it.

R. Hearken, O Lord, and have mercy on us; for we have sinned against Thee.

6. We beseech Thee, Almighty God, receive in Thy fatherly pity Thy people who flee unto Thee from Thine anger; that those who fear to be chastised by the rod of Thy majesty through unprepared death, may be made worthy to rejoice in Thy pardon. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

7. We beseech Thee, Almighty God, graciously incline Thine ear to the assembly of Thy Church, and let Thy mercy to us anticipate Thine anger; for if Thou shouldst mark iniquities, there shall no creature be able to stand before Thee: but in that same admirable charity whereby Thou didst create us, pardon us sinners, and destroy not the work of Thine own hands in an unprepared death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

8. Hear our prayers, O Lord, and enter not into judgment with Thy servants; for, knowing that there is no justice in us on which we can dare to presume, we acknowledge no other fount of mercy whereby we can be washed from our sins, delivered from our infirmities, and especially from unprepared death, but only Thou, O Lord. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

9. O God, before whom every heart trembles and every conscience is awed; show forth Thy mercy upon us Thy suppliants, that we, who trust not in the excellence of our own merit, may never experience Thy judgments by an unprepared death, but may receive Thy pardon. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

PRAYER.

Most merciful Lord Jesus, by Thy agony and bloody sweat, and by Thy death, deliver me, I beseech Thee, from sudden and unprepared death. O most gentle Lord Jesus, by Thy cruel and ignominious scourging and crowning

with thorns, by Thy cross and bitter Passion, and by Thine own great goodness, I humbly pray Thee, let me not die unprepared, and pass from this life without the holy Sacraments. Jesus, my best beloved, my Lord! by all Thy travails and all Thy sorrows, by Thy Precious Blood, and by Thy most holy Wounds, and by those last words spoken by Thee upon the cross,—“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” and again, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,”—most ardently I pray Thee, free me from unprepared death. Thy hands, O my Redeemer, have wholly made and formed me; O suffer not death to take me unawares; grant me, I beseech Thee, time for penance; vouchsafe me a happy passage in Thy grace, that in the world to come I may love Thee with my whole heart, and praise and bless Thee for ever and for ever. Amen.

Then say five *Pater Nosters* and five *Ave Marias* in memory of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and three *Ave Marias* to the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Sorrows.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

BY ST. ALPHONSUS.

My God, prostrate in Thy presence, I adore Thee; and I intend to make the following protestation, as if I were on the point of passing from this life into eternity.

My Lord, because Thou art the infallible Truth, and hast revealed it to the holy Church, I believe in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three Persons, but only one God; who for all eternity rewards the just in heaven, and punishes the wicked in hell. I believe that the Second Person, that is, the Son of God, became man, and died for the salvation of mankind; and I believe all that the holy Church believes. I thank Thee for having made me a Christian, and I protest that I will live and die in this holy Faith.

My God, my hope, trusting in Thy promises, I hope from Thy mercy, not

through my own merits, but through the merits of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of my sins, perseverance, and, after this miserable life, the glory of paradise. And should the devil at the tremendous hour of my death tempt me to despair at the sight of my sins, I protest that I will always hope in Thee, O Lord, and that I desire to die in the loving arms of Thy goodness.

O God! worthy of infinite love, I love Thee with my whole heart, more than I love myself; and I protest that I desire to die, making an act of love, that I may thus continue to love Thee eternally in heaven, which, for this end I desire and ask of Thee. And if hitherto, O Lord, instead of loving Thee I have despised Thy infinite goodness, I repent of it with all my heart, and I protest that I wish to die, always weeping over and detesting the offences I have committed against Thee. I purpose for the future rather to die than ever to sin again; and for the love of Thee I pardon all who have offended me.

O God, I accept of death, and of all the sufferings which may accompany it; I unite it with the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, and offer it in acknowledgment of Thy supreme dominion, and in satisfaction for my many sins. Do Thou, O Lord, accept of this sacrifice which I make of my life, for the love of that great sacrifice which Thy Divine Son made of Himself upon the altar of the cross. I resign myself entirely to Thy divine will, as though I were now on my death-bed, and protest that I wish to die, saying, "O Lord, Thy will be done!" "My Jesus, mercy!"

Most holy Virgin, my Advocate and my Mother Mary, thou wilt be, with Jesus, my hope and my consolation at the hour of death. From this moment I have recourse to thee, and beg of thee to assist me in that tremendous hour. O my Queen and my Mother, do not abandon me in that last moment; come, then, to help my soul, and to present it to thy Son. Let me die under thy mantle, and shielded by thy power. My protector St.

Joseph, St. Michael Archangel, my angel guardian, my holy patrons, do you all assist me in that last combat with hell.

And Thou, my Crucified Love, Thou, my Jesus, who wert pleased to choose for Thyself so bitter a death, to obtain for me a good death, remember at that hour that I am one of those poor sheep Thou didst purchase with Thy Blood. Thou who, when all the world may have forsaken me, and not one shall be able to assist me, canst alone console me and save me, do Thou make me worthy then to receive Thee in the holy Viaticum, and suffer me not to lose Thee for ever, and to be banished for ever to a distance from Thee. No, my beloved Saviour, receive me then into Thy Sacred Wounds, for to Thee I fly for help. At my last breath I wish to breathe forth my soul into the loving wound in Thy Sacred Heart, saying now, for that moment, "O Lord, Thy will be done." "Jesus! Mary! Joseph! I give you my heart and life." "Jesus and Mary, help me." "My Jesus, mercy."

EXHORTATION

*Said by the Priest before administering the
Blessed Eucharist to the Sick.**

As, dear brother, (or dear child,) you now desire to receive the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of your Saviour Jesus Christ, for the food and nourishment of your soul, that by the means of this divine communion you may be united to Him by grace and love; that so He may henceforward live in you, and you may live in Him and by Him, and that nothing in life or death may evermore separate you from Him; behold, here your Saviour comes to you to comply with this your pious desire. And although, in condescension to your weakness,—which in this mortal state is not able to bear the blaze of His glory,—He is pleased to conceal Himself

* For directions concerning the preparations to be made by the attendants on the sick person, refer to page 19.

under this humble appearance of your food; yet it is He Himself in person who comes to visit you; for He says, "*I am the living bread which came down from heaven, If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed.*" (John vi. 51.) And when He instituted this holy Sacrament He declared to His disciples that it was *His body which should be delivered for them, and His blood which should be shed for the remission of sins.* (1 Cor. xi. 24.) He comes, then, in person to visit and comfort you in this your sickness, to take up His abode in your breast, and to unite you to Himself; and He brings all His mercies and graces with Him, to bestow them all on your soul. Do you, then, endeavour to welcome Him by receiving Him with proper dispositions,

of a *lively faith*, an *humble fear*, and an *ardent love*.

1. Raise your heart to Him by *faith*, firmly believing that this Lord of glory came down from heaven for love of you; that He took a body and blood of the Blessed Virgin for the love of you; that in order to redeem and deliver you from Satan, sin, and hell, and to purchase mercy, grace, and salvation for you, He offered up this same body and blood a sacrifice to His Father, by dying upon the cross for the love of you; and that in consequence of this love He gives you in this blessed Sacrament the same body and blood with which He redeemed you upon the cross. You firmly believe these Catholic truths, and all others which the Church of God believes and teaches, because Jesus Christ Himself has taught them; I know you do believe them; and you desire and are resolved to live and die in the faith and communion of this His holy Church.

2. Humble yourself in the presence of this Lord of life, whose majesty is in-

comprehensible. Acknowledge yourself infinitely unworthy that He should enter under your roof to take up His abode in your breast. Beg of Him to pardon all the sins you have ever committed against Him, and to wash them all away with His Precious Blood. Wish that you could receive Him, like Magdalen, with that contrite and humble heart which He never despises. Beseech Him to give you this contrition and humility, and trust in His infinite goodness and mercy that He will now come to you, not for your condemnation, but for your salvation.

3. Yes, my dear brother, (or dear child,) He comes to you to take possession of your soul, to unite you to Himself, and to make you His for all eternity. He comes out of pure love, to make you happy in Him, to fill your soul with all the treasures of His grace here, and to ensure unto you the possession of His heavenly glory hereafter. Raise your heart, then, to Him by a most perfect act of divine love; desiring

on your part to receive Him with all the affection of your soul, and to make Him truly welcome by giving yourself entirely to Him, to be united to Him by eternal love. Say to Him from your heart, (if not in words, at least in thought,) "Sweet Jesus, I believe in Thee; do Thou increase my faith. All my hopes are in Thy goodness and mercy. I love Thee with my whole heart and soul, and I desire to love Thee for ever. O come, my God and Saviour, and take full possession of my soul, and let nothing in life or death evermore separate me from Thee."

AFTER COMMUNION.

Return thanks now to your Saviour Jesus Christ, whom you have received in His holy sacrament, and make an offering of all the powers of your soul and of your whole being to Him. Reflect how great is your happiness in being thus united to Him, in having Him come to take up His abode in your breast; and by this union becoming en-

titled to that everlasting life which He has graciously promised to all who worthily receive Him. Say now, with the spouse in the Canticles (iii. 4.), "*I have found Him whom my soul loveth; I will hold Him fast, and will not let Him go.*" Invite all heaven and earth, with all the angels and saints of God, to bless Him, to praise Him, and to glorify Him for ever, for this and the innumerable other mercies and favours He has bestowed upon you; and wish that you had all the hearts and tongues of the whole world, that you might employ them all in worthy thanksgiving and love. Beg of Him, who knows your inability to make a suitable return for these His favours, to accept of your good will, and of your heart, and to give His blessing to this house into which He has vouchsafed to enter. Beg of Him to wash away all your sins with His Precious Blood, and to strengthen you in such manner by His grace, that you may henceforward be ever faithful to Him, and may never more drive Him

from you by sin. Behold, I leave you now in His blessed company; keep as close to Him as you can, and entertain yourself sweetly and quietly with Him.

BEFORE EXTREME UNCTION.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has been pleased to institute, besides the holy Communion, another heavenly medicine for the benefit of the sick, which is the sacrament of *Extreme Unction*; according to what we read in the Epistle of St. James, where it is said: "*Is any man sick among you? let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.*" (v. 14.) You see here the authority for administering to the sick this holy Unction, from the express word of God. And also the great graces and benefits which God promises to bestow on every one who receives this sacrament with

proper dispositions, namely, *that He will save the sick man, will raise him up from his sick bed*, if He sees his recovery expedient for the welfare of his soul; and, what is infinitely more desirable than corporal health, will impart to him the *forgiveness of his sins*. Acknowledge, then, the infinite goodness of your Redeemer, and with the most lively sentiments of gratitude and love embrace the great grace which is here prepared for you in this heavenly institution; and join your attention and devotion with the prayers we shall now make to our Lord for the healing of your soul and body, and to obtain for you the full remission of all your sins. And, as the eyes, the ears, and the other organs of sense, are the instruments by which men are led to offend Almighty God, they will on that account be anointed with the holy Oil. Whilst we apply this holy Oil to your eyes, your ears, and your other senses, do you, with a contrite and humble heart, implore the mercy of God for the forgive-

ness of all the sins which through these avenues have made their way into your soul. Pray also for His supporting grace in this your illness, and that you may continue to the end ever faithful to Him.

While the priest is administering this Sacrament to the sick person, one of the assistants may, before each Unction, read one of the following short prayers, corresponding to the organ of sense that is next to be anointed, that it may be repeated by the sick person.

My eyes have seen vanities, but now let them be shut to the world, and open to Thee alone, my Jesus; and pardon me all the sins I have committed by my seeing.

My ears have been open to detraction, profaneness, and unprofitable discourses; let me now give ear to Thy word, to Thy commands, and Thy call; and pardon me, O Jesus, all the sins I have committed by my hearing.

I have taken delight in the perfumes of this world, which are nothing but corruptions; now let my heart and prayers ascend like incense in Thy sight,

and pardon me all the sins I have committed by my smelling.

My tongue has many ways offended, both in speaking and tasting; now let its whole business be to cry for mercy. Pardon me, dear Jesus, all the sins I have committed by words, or by any excess in eating and drinking.

My hands have offended in contributing to many follies injurious to myself and my neighbour; now let them be lifted up to heaven in testimony of a penitent heart, and pardon me, O Lord, all the sins I have committed by the ill use of my hands.

My feet have gone astray in the paths of vanity and sin; now let me walk in the way of Thy commandments, and forgive me, O Lord, all the sins I have committed by my disordered steps.

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AFTER EXTREME UNCTION.

Return thanks now to your loving Saviour with your whole heart, for having favoured you with all these helps in your sickness. Reflect how many are

carried off by sudden death, or otherwise die without the holy Sacraments, or any of the extraordinary graces which God has afforded you. Beg of Him that this holy Unction may produce in you all the happy fruits for which it was instituted by the goodness of your Saviour, by healing your soul of all its weaknesses and spiritual maladies; by fortifying you against all the temptations of the enemy; by supporting and comforting you under all your pains and anguish; by preparing and disposing you for whatever may be the holy will of God in your regard; and, if He sees it expedient for you, by restoring you to your bodily health and strength. In the meantime, keep yourself as much as you can in the company of your Saviour Jesus Christ; but let it be with the dispositions of a true penitent, often bewailing your sins at His feet, and calling upon Him for mercy. Hide yourself in His wounds, and bathe yourself in His Precious Blood. A truly penitent spirit will be your best security both in

life and death. But then, let this be joined with a great confidence in the mercy of God, and in the merits of Jesus Christ, who died for you. Keep your eyes fixed upon Him; contemplate the infinite and eternal happiness He has prepared for you in His heavenly kingdom; relinquish from this moment all worldly concerns, and all desires of remaining any longer in this place of banishment; and frequently say, with St. Paul, "*I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ;*" resign yourself entirely into His hands; let the consideration of the holy will of God, the glory He has prepared for you, and the sufferings your Saviour endured for your sake, animate you to bear with patience all your sufferings. Offer up all your pains and uneasiness to Him; accept them as a penance justly inflicted on you for your sins; and pray that they may be sanctified and accepted through Him. Beg also the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and of all the glorious angels and

saints of God, that you may be helped by their prayers, both in life and death.

QUESTIONS PROPER TO BE ASKED OF THE SICK, TO EXCITE THEM TO MAKE ACTS OF THE NECESSARY VIRTUES.

Do you firmly believe all the Articles of Faith which the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church believes and teaches?

R. I do believe them.

Do you firmly hope that God will be merciful to you, and that through the merits of Jesus Christ you will obtain from Him the forgiveness of your sins and life everlasting?

R. I do.

Do you love God with your whole heart, and do you desire to love Him as the blessed do in heaven?

R. I do.

Are you, for the love of God, sorry from your heart for every offence you have committed against Him and against your neighbour?

R. I am.

Do you, for God's sake, forgive from your heart every one who has ever offended you or been your enemy?

R. I do.

Do you now, from your heart, ask pardon of every one whom you have offended by word or deed?

R. I do.

Do you receive your present and future sufferings as a penance justly inflicted on you by Almighty God, and will you endeavour to bear them with the patience becoming a Christian?

R. I do so receive them, and will endeavour to bear them with patience and resignation to the holy will of God.

If it shall please God to restore you again to your bodily health and strength, will you, during the remainder of your life, carefully endeavour to avoid sin, and keep all His divine commandments?

R. This is my determined resolution.

SHORT ACTS OF THE MOST NECESSARY VIRTUES,

TO BE SUGGESTED TO THE SICK, LEISURELY
AND DISTINCTLY, MORE ESPECIALLY WHEN
THEY ARE DRAWING NEAR TO THEIR END,
AND CANNOT BEAR LONGER PRAYERS.

O my God, I accept of this illness with which Thou hast been pleased to visit me. I bow down my whole soul to adore Thee in all Thy appointments, and I offer up myself to Thee for time and eternity.

Lord, do with me what Thou plearest; not my will, but Thine be done. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Lord Jesus, who hast died for me, have mercy on me. Lord, I believe in Thee. I believe all Thou hast taught me by Thy word and by Thy Church.

In Thee, O Lord, I put all my trust; O let me never be confounded.

Hide me, dear Jesus, in Thy wounds; bathe my soul in Thy Precious Blood. O protect and defend me in this hour.

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Lord Jesus, receive my soul.

O my God, I desire to praise Thee, to bless Thee, and to glorify Thee for all eternity.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, &c.

O Divine Love, take Thou full possession of my soul. O my God, teach me to love Thee for ever.

I give Thee thanks, O God, with my whole heart, for all Thy graces and benefits; pardon, I beseech Thee, all my ingratitude, together with all the other sins of my whole life.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out all my iniquity.

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me.

Remember, dear Jesus, Thou hast purchased me for Thyself by Thy Precious Blood; O let nothing ever separate me from Thee.

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

O my good angel, stand by me in this hour.

O all ye blessed angels and saints of God, assist me by your prayers.

I renounce Satan and all his suggestions; O ye blessed spirits of God, drive this wicked enemy far from me.

It may likewise be proper, from time to time, to repeat leisurely to the sick person the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer, as also to set before him the image or picture of Christ crucified, and to present it to him to kiss.

BEFORE GIVING THE LAST BENEDICTION.

You have, dear brother, (or dear child,) by the goodness of God, already received all the holy sacraments, ordained to strengthen your soul with the grace of God in your illness, and to arm you for your last conflict in your journey to eternity. However, that nothing may be wanting that can be serviceable

to your soul, I will now impart to you, by virtue of the faculty I have received from the Holy See, the *Apostolical Benediction* of his Holiness, together with a *plenary indulgence*, for the full discharge of whatever temporal punishment may remain due from you, that might otherwise retard your entrance into heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave to St. Peter *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, (Matt. xvi.) and told him that *whatsoever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and whatsoever he should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven*.

By this power, derived from St. Peter to his successors, and which has by them been communicated to me, I will now proceed to grant you this indulgence. But you also, on your part, must endeavour to concur, and by a hearty act of contrition, renounce and detest, both in effect and affection, all your sins, both known and unknown, mortal and venial, and accept with patience and resignation what you may have yet to suffer. Offer up all your pains and your death, in

union with the sufferings and death of your Redeemer, in satisfaction for your sins.

Wherefore now raise your heart to heaven by a lively faith in your Saviour Jesus Christ, who died for you, and with an entire confidence in His mercy and goodness, offer your whole soul to Him, to love Him for all eternity; beg His pardon from the bottom of your heart, for all your sins; accept of the penance of death as due to them; and trust in His divine mercy that He will now release you from all your sins and the punishment due to them, and that, at the hour of your death, He receive you into the mansions of eternal bliss. Amen.

THE RECOMMENDATION OF A DEPARTING SOUL.

Lord, have mercy on him (or her.)
Christ, have mercy on him.

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Lord, have mercy on him.

Holy Mary, *pray for him (or her.)*

All ye holy Angels and Archangels,

Holy Abel,

All ye choirs of the Just,

Holy Abraham,

St. John the Baptist,

St. Joseph,

All ye holy Patriarchs and Prophets,

St. Peter,

St. Paul,

St. Andrew,

St. John,

All ye holy Apostles and Evan-
gelists,

All ye holy Disciples of our Lord,

All ye holy Innocents,

St. Stephen,

St. Lawrence,

All ye holy Martyrs,

St. Sylvester,

St. Gregory,

St. Augustine,

All ye holy Bishops and Confessors,

St. Benedict,

St. Francis,

Pray for him (or her.)

All ye holy Monks and Hermits, *Pray
for him (or her.)*

St. Mary Magdalen, *Pray for him.*

St. Lucy, *Pray for him.*

All ye holy Virgins and Widows, *Pray
for him.*

All ye men and women, Saints of God,
Intercede for him (or her.)

Be merciful unto him. *Spare him, O
Lord.*

Be merciful unto him. *Deliver him (or
her), O Lord.*

Be merciful unto him,

From Thy wrath,

From the danger of eternal death,

From an evil death,

From the pains of hell,

From all evil,

From the power of the devil,

By Thy Nativity,

By Thy Cross and Passion,

By Thy Death and Burial,

By Thy glorious Resurrection,

By Thy wonderful Ascension,

By the grace of the Holy Ghost the
Comforter,

Deliver him (or her), O Lord.

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In the day of Judgment, *Deliver him (or her), O Lord.*

We sinners, *beseech Thee to hear us.*

That Thou spare him, *We beseech Thee to hear us.*

Lord, have mercy on him.

Christ, have mercy on him.

Lord, have mercy on him.

Go forth, O Christian soul, out of this world, in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified thee; in the name of the angels, archangels, thrones and dominations, cherubim and seraphim; in the name of the patriarchs and prophets, of the holy apostles and evangelists, of the holy martyrs, confessors, monks, and hermits, of the holy virgins, and of all the saints of God. May thy place be this day in peace, and thy abode in holy Sion. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O merciful and gracious God, O God,

who according to the multitude of Thy mercies blottest out the sins of such as repent, and graciously remittest the guilt of their past offences, mercifully regard this Thy servant N., and grant him a full discharge from all his sins, who with a contrite heart most earnestly begs it of Thee. Renew, O merciful Father, whatever has been vitiated in him by human frailty, or by the frauds and deceits of the enemy, and associate him as a member of redemption to the unity of the body of the Church. Have compassion, O Lord, on his sighs, have compassion on his tears; and admit him, who has no hope but in Thy mercy, to the sacrament of Thy reconciliation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I commend thee, dear brother, to the Almighty God, and consign thee to the care of Him, whose creature thou art, that when thou shalt have paid the debt of all mankind by death, thou mayest return to thy Maker, who formed thee from the dust of the earth. When, therefore, thy soul shall depart from thy

body, may the resplendent multitude of the angels meet thee; may the court of the apostles receive thee; may the triumphant army of glorious martyrs come out to welcome thee; may the splendid company of confessors, clad in their white robes, encompass thee; may the choir of joyful virgins receive thee; and mayest thou meet with a blessed repose in the bosom of the patriarchs; may Jesus Christ appear to thee with a mild and joyful countenance, and appoint thee a place amongst those who are to stand before Him for ever. Mayest thou be a stranger to all that is punished with darkness, chastised with flames, and condemned to torments. May the most wicked enemy, with all his evil spirits, be forced to give way; may he tremble at thy approach in the company of angels, and with confusion fly away into the vast chaos of eternal night. Let God arise, and His enemies be dispersed, and let them that hate Him fly before His face, let them vanish like smoke; and as wax that melts be-

fore the fire, so let sinners perish in the sight of God; but may the just rejoice and be happy in His presence. May, then, all the legions of hell be confounded and put to shame, and may none of the ministers of Satan dare to stop thee in thy way. May Christ deliver thee from torments, who was crucified for thee. May He deliver thee from eternal death, who vouchsafed to die for thee. May Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, place thee in the ever-verdant lawns of His Paradise, and may He, the true Shepherd, acknowledge thee for one of His flock. May He absolve thee from all thy sins, and place thee at His right hand in the midst of His elect. Mayest thou see thy Redeemer face to face, and, standing always in His presence, behold with happy eyes the most clear truth. And mayest thou be placed among the companies of the blessed, and enjoy the sweetness of the contemplation of thy God for ever. Amen.

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Receive, O Lord, Thy servant into the place of salvation, which he hopes to obtain through Thy mercy. *R. Amen.*

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant from all danger of hell, and from all pain and tribulation. *R. Amen.*

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Enoch and Elias from the common death of the world. *R. Amen.*

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Noah from the flood. *R. Amen.*

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Abraham from the midst of the Chaldeans. *R. Amen.*

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Job from all his afflictions. *R. Amen.*

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Isaac from being sacrificed by his father. *R. Amen.*

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Lot from being destroyed in the flames of Sodom. *R. Amen.*

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Moses from the hands of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. **R. Amen.**

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Daniel from the lions' den. **R. Amen.**

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst the Three Children from the fiery furnace, and from the hands of an unmerciful king. **R. Amen.**

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Susanna from her false accusers. **R. Amen.**

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst David from the hands of Saul and Goliah. **R. Amen.**

Deliver, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant, as Thou deliveredst Peter and Paul out of prison. **R. Amen.**

And as Thou deliveredst that blessed virgin and martyr, Saint Thecla, from three most cruel torments, so vouchsafe to deliver the soul of this Thy servant,

and bring it to the participation of Thy heavenly joys. R. Amen.

We commend to Thee, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant N., and we beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, that as in mercy to him Thou becamest man, so now Thou wouldst vouchsafe to admit him to the bosom of Thy patriarchs. Remember, O Lord, he is Thy creature, not made by strange gods, but by Thee, the only living and true God; for there is no other but Thee, and none can equal Thy works. Let his soul rejoice in Thy presence, and remember not his former iniquities and excesses, which he has fallen into through the violence of passion and the corruption of his nature. For although he has sinned, yet he has always firmly believed in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; he has had a zeal for Thy honour, and faithfully adored Thee as his God and the Creator of all things.

Remember not, O Lord, we beseech

Thee, the sins of his youth, and his ignorances, but according to Thy great mercy be mindful of him in Thy heavenly glory. Let the heavens be opened to him, and the angels rejoice with him. Let the archangel St. Michael, whom Thou hast appointed the chief of the heavenly host, conduct him. Let the holy angels come out to meet him, and carry him to the city of the heavenly Jerusalem. Let blessed Peter the apostle, to whom God gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, receive him. Let St. Paul the apostle, who was a vessel of election, assist him. Let St. John the beloved disciple, to whom the secrets of heaven were revealed, intercede for him. Let all the holy apostles, who received from Jesus Christ the power of binding and loosing, pray for him. Let all the saints and elect of God, who in this world have suffered torments for the name of Christ, intercede for him; that being freed from the prison of his body, he may be admitted into the glory of Thy heavenly kingdom. Through

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the grace and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with Thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth one God, world without end. Amen.

If the dying person continue long in his agony, the 17th, 18th, and 19th chapters of the Gospel according to St. John may be read.

A PRAYER TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, COMMEMORATING THE SEVERAL STAGES OF HIS PASSION, TO BE SAID BY THE DYING PERSON, OR BY ANOTHER FOR HIM.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

O God, who for the redemption of the world didst vouchsafe to be born, to be circumcised, to be rejected by the Jews, to be betrayed by Judas the traitor with a kiss, to be bound with cords and chains, as an innocent lamb to be led to the slaughter; to be ignominiously exposed before Annas, Caiphas, Pilate, and Herod; to be accused by false witnesses, scourged, and shamefully loaded;

to be spit upon, crowned with thorns, buffeted in the face, struck with a reed, blindfolded, stripped of Thy clothes, fastened with nails to a cross, and then raised upon it; to be numbered among thieves; to taste of gall and vinegar; and to be pierced with a lance; by these Thy most holy sufferings, which I, though unworthy, commemorate, and by Thy most sacred Death and Passion, do Thou, O Lord, deliver me, (*or if another says it for him, deliver Thy servant N.*) from the pains of hell, and conduct me whither Thy mercy did conduct the penitent thief, who was crucified with Thee. Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest for ever. Amen.

THREE PIOUS PRAYERS USEFUL FOR THE DYING,

To be recited with three *Our Fathers* and three
Hail Marys, in the agony of death.

First is said, Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have

mercy on us. Our Father, &c. Hail Mary, &c.

O Lord Jesus Christ, by Thy most sacred agony, and by the prayer which Thou didst pour forth for us on the mount of Olives, where Thy sweat became as drops of blood running down upon the earth, I beseech Thee to offer up the many drops of Thy bloody sweat which in Thy fearful anguish Thou didst most abundantly shed for us, and graciously to present them to Thy Almighty Father, to be set against the many sins of this Thy servant N., and mercifully deliver him in this hour of his death from all the pains and sufferings which he fears he may justly have deserved for his sins. Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest, God, world without end. Amen.

A second time is said, Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us. Our Father. Hail Mary.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst vouchsafe to die upon the cross for us, I

beseech Thee to offer up to Thy Almighty Father all the bitter pains and sufferings which Thou didst endure for us upon the cross, especially in that hour when Thy most holy soul quitted Thy most sacred body; and present them in behalf of this Thy servant N., and deliver him in this hour of death from all the pains and sufferings which he fears he may justly have deserved for his sins. Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen.

A third time is said, Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us. Our Father. Hail Mary.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who by the mouth of Thy prophet hast said, "*I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee,* (Jer. xxxi. 3,) I beseech Thee to offer up this same love which drew Thee down from heaven to earth, there to endure all the bitterness of Thy Passion, and present it to Thy Almighty Father

for the soul of this Thy servant N., and deliver him from all the pains and sufferings which he fears to have deserved for his sins, and save his soul in this hour of his departure. Open unto him the gates of life, and give him to rejoice with Thy saints in eternal glory. And do Thou, O most merciful Lord Jesus Christ, who didst redeem us by Thy most Precious Blood, have mercy on the soul of this Thy servant, and vouchsafe to introduce him into the ever-verdant and delicious places of paradise, that he may live to Thee with an indissoluble love, and never be separated from Thee and Thy elect. Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen.

If the dying person continue in his senses, some of the short acts set down above to be inculcated to dying persons may be suggested to him, or the following acts be made.

AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

O my God, Thou hast created, redeemed, and sanctified me. Thou hast

preserved me in many dangers, both of body and soul. Thou hast fed me with Thy most blessed Body and Blood. Thou hast shown immense patience in bearing with my repeated crimes, and often called me to repentance. For these and all other blessings bestowed upon me, a most ungrateful sinner, I offer Thee innumerable thanks.

ACT OF RESIGNATION.

O my God, I cheerfully receive the certain summons of my death. It is a greater happiness to fulfil Thy will than to enjoy ten thousand lives. O happy news of my departure! I shall soon hear the choirs of angels sing Thy eternal praises. Let death hasten his pace, that dying I may no more offend Thee, but live with Thee and love Thee eternally.

ACT OF CONTRITION.

I am truly and heartily sorry for all my sins, not for the fear of hell, nor for the hope of reward, but for the love of

Thee, my God and only good. And were I beginning as I am ending my life, I would not offend Thee for a thousand worlds. O my God, despise not a contrite and humble heart.

When the soul is about to depart from the body, then more than ever ought they who are by to pray earnestly upon their knees around the sick man's bed; and if the dying man be unable to speak, the name of Jesus should constantly be invoked, and such words as the following again and again be repeated in his ear.

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

O Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit.
Holy Mary, pray for me.

Holy Mary, Mother of grace, Mother of mercy, do thou defend me from the enemy, and receive me at the hour of death.

The soul being departed, the following Responsory is to be said.

Come to his assistance, all ye saints of God; meet him, all ye angels of God; receiving his soul, offering it in the sight of the Most High. May Christ

receive thee, who hath called thee, and may the angels conduct thee to Abraham's bosom, receiving his soul, and offering it in the sight of the Most High.

V. Eternal rest give to him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.

R. Offering it in the sight of the Most High.

V. Lord, have mercy on him.

R. Christ, have mercy on him.

V. Lord, have mercy on him.

Our Father, &c.

V. And lead us not into temptation.

R. But deliver us from evil.

V. Eternal rest give to him, O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon him.

V. From the gates of hell,

R. Deliver his soul, O Lord.

V. May he rest in peace.

R. Amen.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my supplication come unto Thee.

Let us pray.

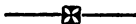
To Thee, O Lord, we commend the soul of Thy servant N., that being dead to this world, he may live to Thee; and whatever sins he has committed in this life through human frailty, do Thou in Thy most merciful goodness forgive. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

Then, for a conclusion, may be added the following Prayer for those who are present.

Grant, O God, that while we lament the departure of this Thy servant we may always remember that we are most certainly to follow him. And give us grace to prepare for that last hour by a good life, that we may not be surprised by a sudden and unprovided death, but be ever watching, that when Thou shalt call we may, with the bridegroom, enter into eternal glory. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BOOK IV.

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.



MASS FOR THE DEAD.

ON THE DAY OF DECEASE OR BURIAL.

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| INTROIT. Requiem | Grant them eter- |
| æternam dona eis, | nal rest, O Lord ; |
| Domine; et lux per- | and let perpetual |
| petua luceat eis. <i>Ps.</i> | light shine on them. |
| Te decet hymnus, | <i>Ps.</i> A hymn be- |
| Deus, in Sion : et | cometh Thee, O God, |
| tibi reddetur votum | in Sion : and a vow |
| in Jerusalem. Ex- | shall be paid to Thee |
| audi orationem me- | in Jerusalem. O |
| am : ad te omnis | hear my prayer : all |
| caro veniet. Re- | flesh shall come to |
| quiem, &c. to <i>Ps.</i> | Thee. Grant them, |
| | &c. to <i>Ps.</i> |

COLL. *Deus, cui.* O God, whose property it is always to have mercy and to spare, we humbly present our prayers to Thee in behalf of the soul of Thy servant N., which Thou hast this day called out of the world: beseeching Thee not to deliver it into the hands of the enemy, nor to forget it for ever, but command it to be received by the holy angels, and to be carried into paradise: that as it believed and hoped in Thee, it may be delivered from the pains of hell, and inherit everlasting life. Through.

EPISTLE. 1 *Thess.* iv. 12, 17. *Brethren*: We will not have you ignorant concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them who have slept through Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you in the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them who have slept. For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven

with commandment, and with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead who are in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord. Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words.

GRAD. Requiem Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, Domine; et lux perpetua luceat eis. V. light shine on them. In memoria æterna V. The just shall be in everlasting remembrance: he shall not fear the evil hearing.

TRACT. Absolve Release, O Lord, Domine animas omnium fidelium defunctorum ab omni vinculo delictorum: their sins. V. And by the assistance of Thy grace may they escape the sentence

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| cium ultionis: V. of condemnation. V. | |
| Et lucis æternæ be- | And enjoy the bliss |
| atitudine perfrui. | of eternal light. |

THE SEQUENCE OR PROSE.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Dies iræ, dies illa | The day of wrath, that dreadful day |
| Solvat sæclum in fa- | Shall the whole world |
| villa, | in ashes lay, |
| Teste David cum Sy- | As David and the Sy- |
| billa. | bils say. |
| Quantus tremor est | What horror will in- |
| futurus, | vade the mind, |
| Quando Judex est ven- | When the strict Judge, |
| turus, | who would be kind, |
| Cuncta stricte discus- | Shall have few venial |
| surus. | faults to find? |
| Tuba mirum spargens | The last loud trum- |
| sonum | pet's wondrous sound |
| Per sepulchra regio- | Must thro' the rending |
| num, | tombs rebound, |
| Coget omnes ante | And wake the nations |
| thronum. | underground. |
| Mors stupebit, et na- | Nature and death shall |
| tura, | with surprise |

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Cum resurget creatura, | Behold the pale of- |
| | fender rise, |
| Judicanti responsura. | And view the Judge |
| | with conscious eyes. |
| Liber scriptus profere- | Then shall with uni- |
| tur | versal dread, |
| In quo totum contine- | The sacred mystic |
| tur, | book be read, |
| Unde mundus judice- | To try the living and |
| tur. | the dead. |
| Judex ergo cum sede- | The Judge ascends His |
| bit, | awful throne, |
| Quidquid latet ap- | He makes each secret |
| parebit : | sin be known, |
| Nil inultum remane- | And all with shame |
| bit. | confess their own. |
| Quid sum, miser, tunc | O then ! what interest |
| dicturus, | shall I make, |
| Quem patronum roga- | To save my last im- |
| turus, | portant stake, |
| Cum vix justus sit | When the most just |
| securus ? | have cause to quake ? |
| Rex tremendæ majes- | Thou mighty formid- |
| tatis ! | able King ! |
| Qui salvandos salvas | Thou mercy's unex- |
| gratis, | hausted spring ! |
| Salva me fons pietatis. | Some comfortable pity |
| | bring. |

Recordare Jesu pie, Forget not what my
ransom cost,

Quod cum causa tuæ Nor let my dear-
viæ, bought soul be lost,

Ne me perdas illa die. In storms of guilty
terror toss'd.

Quærens me, sedisti Thou, who for me didst
lassus; feel such pain,

Redemisti, crucem Whose Precious Blood
passus: the cross did stain:

Tantus labor non sit Let not those agonies
cassus. be vain.

Juste Judex ultionis, Thou whom avenging
pow'rs obey,

Donum fac remissio- Cancel my debt (too
nis, great to pay)

Ante diem rationis, Before the great ac-
counting day.

Ingemisco tanquam Surrounded with amaz-
reus; ing fears;

Culpa rubet vultus Whose load my soul
meus; with anguish bears;

Supplicanti parce, De- I sigh, I weep; accept
us. my tears.

Qui Mariam absolvisti, Thou, who wast mov'd
with Mary's grief,

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Et latronem exaudisti, | And by absolving of the thief, |
| Mihi quoque spem dedisti. | Hast given me hope, now give relief. |
| Preces meæ non sunt dignæ: | Reject not my unworthy prayer, |
| Sed tu bonus fac benigne, | Preserve me from the dangerous snare, |
| Ne perenni cremer igne. | Which death and gaping hell prepare. |
| Inter oves locum præstata, | Give my exalted soul a place |
| Et ab hædis me sequestra, | Among the chosen right-hand race, |
| Statuens in parte dextra. | The sons of God, and heirs of grace. |
| Confutatis maledictis, | From that insatiate abyss, |
| Flammis acribus addictis, | Where flames devour and serpents hiss, |
| Voca me cum benedictis. | Promote me to Thy seat of bliss. |
| Oro supplex et acclinis, | Prostrate, my contrite heart I rend, |
| Cor contritum quasi cinis, | My God, my Father, and my Friend: |
| Gere curam mei finis. | Do not forsake me in my end. |

Lacrymosa dies illa! Well may they curse
 Qua resurget ex fa- their second birth,
 villa Who rise to a surviv-
 Judicandus homo reus. ing death.

Huic ergo parce Deus: Thou great Creator of
 mankind,
 Pie Jesu Domine, dona Let guilty man com-
 eis requiem. Amen. passion find. Amen.

GOSPEL. *John xi. 21, 28.* *At that time :*
 Martha said to Jesus: Lord, if Thou
 hadst been here my brother had not
 died. But now also I know that what-
 soever Thou wilt ask of God, God will
 give it Thee. Jesus saith to her: Thy
 brother shall rise again. Martha saith
 to Him: I know that he shall rise again
 in the resurrection at the last day.
 Jesus said to her: I am the resurrection
 and the life; he that believeth in Me,
 although he be dead, shall live. And
 every one that liveth, and believeth in
 Me, shall not die for ever. Believest
 thou this? She saith to Him: Yea,
 Lord, I have believed that Thou art
 Christ the Son of the living God, who
 art come into this world.

OFFERT. Domine Lord Jesus Christ,
 Jesu Christe, Rex King of glory, de-
 glorix, libera ani- liver the souls of all
 mas omnium fide- the faithful depart-
 lium defunctorum ed from the flames
 de pœnis inferni, et of hell, and from
 de profundo lacu: the deep pit. De-
 libera eas de ore liver them from the
 leonis, ne absorbeat lion's mouth, lest
 eas tartarus, ne ca- hell swallow them,
 dant in obscurum; lest they fall into
 sed signifer sanctus darkness: and let
 Michael repræsen- the standard-bearer
 tet eas in lucem St. Michael bring
 sanctam: — Quam them into the holy
 olim Abrahæ pro- light: Which Thou
 misisti, et semini promisedst of old to
 ejus. V. Hostias Abraham and his
 et preces tibi, Do- posterity. V. We
 mine, laudis offeri- offer Thee, O Lord,
 mus: tu suscipe pro a sacrifice of praise
 animabus illis, qua- and prayer: accept
 rum hodie memo- them in behalf of
 riam facimus: fac the souls we com-
 eas, Domine, de memorate this day:
 morte transire ad and let them pass

vitam. Quam olim from death to life.
 Abrahæ promisisi, Which Thou pro-
 et semini ejus. misedst of old to
 Abraham and his
 posterity.

SECRET. Have mercy, O Lord, we be-
 seech Thee on the soul of Thy servant
 N.; for which we offer this victim of
 praise, humbly beseeching Thy majesty
 that by this propitiatory sacrifice he (or
 she) may arrive at eternal rest. Through.

COMM. Lux æter- Let eternal light
 na luceat eis, Do- shine on them, O
 mine: * Cum sanctis Lord, * with Thy
 tuis in æternam, saints for ever: for
 quia pius es. V. Thou art merciful.
 Requiem æternam V. Grant them, O
 dona eis, Domine; Lord, eternal rest,
 et lux perpetua lu- and let perpetual
 ceat eis: * Cum light shine on them.
 sanctis to V. * With, to V.

P. COMM. *Præsta.* Grant, we be-
 seech Thee, O Almighty God, that the
 soul of Thy servant, which this day hath
 departed this life, being purified and
 freed from sin by this sacrifice, may ob-

tain both forgiveness and eternal rest.
Through.

On the 3rd, 7th, or 30th day after Decease, the whole
of the foregoing Mass is said, except

COLL. *Quæsumus*. Admit, we beseech
Thee, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant
N. (the third, seventh, or thirtieth day)
of whose decease we commemorate, in
the fellowship of Thy saints, and refresh
it with the perpetual dew of Thy mercy.
Through.

SECRET. Mercifully look down, O
Lord, we beseech Thee, on the offerings
we make for the soul of Thy servant N.,
that being purified by these heavenly
mysteries, it may find rest in Thy
mercy. Through.

P. COMM. *Suscipe*. Receive, O Lord,
our prayers in behalf of the soul of Thy
servant N., that if any stains of the
corruption of this world still stick to it,
they may be washed away by Thy for-
giving mercy. Through.

ANNIVERSARY MASS FOR THE DEAD.

All as on the day of Decease or Burial,
except

COLL. *Deus indulgentiarum.* O God, the Lord of mercy, give to the soul (*souls*) of Thy servant (*servants*) whose anniversary we commemorate, a place of comfort, a happy rest, and the light of glory. Through.

LESSON. 2 *Mach.* xii. 43, 46. *In those days:* Judas the valiant commander making a gathering, sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead; thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.

GOSPEL. *John* vi. 37, 40. *At that time* : Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews : All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me ; and him that cometh to Me I will not cast out. Because I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. Now this is the will of the Father who sent Me : that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day. And this is the will of My Father who sent Me : that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day.

SECRET. Favourably hear, O Lord, our humble prayers in behalf of the soul (*souls*) of Thy servant (*servants*), the anniversary of whose death is this day, for whom we offer up this sacrifice of praise ; that Thou mayest vouchsafe to admit it (*them*) to the fellowship of Thy saints.

P. COMM. *Præsta*. Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that the soul (*souls*) of

Thy servant (*servants*), the anniversary of whose death we commemorate, being purified by this sacrifice, may obtain both pardon and eternal rest. Through.

THE COMMON MASS FOR THE DEAD.

All as on the day of Decease or Burial, except

FOR BISHOPS OR PRIESTS.

COLL. *Deus, qui.* O God, by whose favour Thy servants were raised to the dignity of bishops (or priests), and thus honoured with the apostolic function: grant, we beseech Thee, that they may be admitted to the eternal fellowship of Thy apostles in heaven. Through.

FOR BRETHREN, FRIENDS, AND BENEFACTORS.

COLL. *Deus Veniæ.* O God, the Author of mercy, and lover of the salvation of mankind; we address Thy clemency in behalf of our brethren, relations, and benefactors, who are departed this life, that by the intercession of blessed Mary,

ever a virgin, and of all Thy saints, Thou wouldst receive them into the enjoyment of eternal happiness. Through.

FOR ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED.

COLL. *Fidelium*. O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, give to the souls of Thy servants departed the remission of their sins: that through the help of pious supplications they may obtain the pardon they have always desired. Who livest.

LESSON. *Apoc.* xiv. 13. *In those days:* I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: for their works follow them.

GOSPEL. *John* vi. 51, 55. *At that time:* Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, say-

ing: How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day.

FOR BISHOPS OR PRIESTS.

SECRET. Accept, O Lord, we beseech Thee, the sacrifice we offer for the souls of Thy servants, bishops (or priests), that those whom in this life Thou didst honour with the episcopal (or priestly) dignity, Thou mayest join to the fellowship of Thy saints in the kingdom of heaven. Through.

FOR BRETHREN, FRIENDS, AND BENEFACTORS.

SECRET. O God, whose mercy is infinite, graciously hear the prayers which we Thy humble servants offer Thee; and grant to the souls of our brethren, friends, and benefactors, on whom Thou

didst bestow the grace to confess Thy name, the pardon of all their sins by these mysteries of our salvation. Thro'.

FOR ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED.

SECRET. Look down favourably, we beseech Thee, O Lord, on the sacrifice we offer for the souls of Thy servants; that as Thou wast pleased to bestow on them the merit of Christian faith, Thou wouldst also grant them the reward thereof. Through.

FOR BISHOPS OR PRIESTS.

P. COMM. *Prosit.* Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, by Thy merciful clemency, which we have implored on behalf of the souls of Thy servants, bishops (or priests), that by Thy mercy they may eternally enjoy Thy presence, in whom they have hoped and believed. Through.

FOR BRETHREN, FRIENDS, AND BENEFACTORS.

P. COMM. *Præsta.* Grant, we beseech Thee, O almighty and merciful God, that the souls of our brethren, friends, and

benefactors, for whom we have offered this sacrifice to Thy Majesty, being by virtue of these mysteries purified from all sin, may, through Thy mercy, receive the blessing of perpetual light. Through. .

FOR ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED.

P. COMM. *Animabus.* Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that our humble prayers in behalf of the souls of Thy servants, both men and women, may be profitable to them: so that Thou mayest deliver them from all their sins, and make them partakers of the redemption Thou hast purchased for them. Who livest.

VARIOUS PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

FOR A PRIEST DEPARTED.

COLL. *Præsta quæsumus.* Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that the soul of Thy servant N., priest, whom Thou hast adorned with Thy sacred gifts in this

world, may for ever rejoice in the glorious seat of heavenly bliss. Through.

SECRET. Receive, O Lord, we beseech Thee, this sacrifice which we offer for the soul of Thy servant N., priest, that having given him the priestly dignity, Thou mayest also give him the reward of it. Through.

P. COMM. *Præsta quæsumus.* Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the soul of Thy servant N., priest, may be united in fellowship to the congregation of the just in eternal bliss. Through.

FOR A MAN DEPARTED.

COLL. *Inclina, Domine.* Incline, O Lord, Thy ear to our prayers, by which we humbly beseech Thy mercy, that Thou wouldst place the soul of Thy servant N., whom Thou hast taken out of this world, in the region of light and peace; and make him a companion of Thy saints. Through.

SECRET. Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that this oblation may be profit-

able to the soul of Thy servant N., by immolating which Thou hast vouchsafed to remit the sins of the world. Through.

P. COMM. *Absolve, quæsumus.* Absolve, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant N. from every chain of sin, that rising again in the glory of the resurrection, he may enjoy a new life amongst Thy saints and elect. Through.

FOR A WOMAN DEPARTED.

COLL. *Quæsumus, Domine.* Have mercy, we beseech Thee, O Lord, through Thy goodness, on the soul of Thy servant N., and having freed her from the corruption of this mortal life, grant her a share in eternal salvation. Through.

SECRET. May these sacrifices, we beseech Thee, O Lord, deliver the soul of Thy servant N. from all her sins, without which none was ever wholly free from guilt, that by these pious offices of reconciliation she may obtain perpetual mercy. Through.

P. COMM. *Inveniat, quæsumus.* Grant,

we beseech Thee, O Lord, that the soul of Thy servant N., having received the sacrament of perpetual mercy, may enjoy eternal light. Through.

FOR A DECEASED FATHER OR MOTHER.

Deus qui nos. O God, who hast commanded us to honour our father and mother: mercifully show pity to the soul of my father (or my mother), and forgive his (her or their) sins; and grant that I may see him (her or them) in the joys of eternal life. Through.

SECRET. Receive, O Lord, the sacrifice I offer for the soul of my father (or of my mother): grant him (her or them) eternal joys in the land of the living: and associate me with him (her or them) in the bliss of Thy saints. Through.

P. COMM. May the participation of these heavenly mysteries, O Lord, I beseech Thee, obtain rest and light for the soul of my father (or of my mother): and may Thy grace crown me with him (her or them) for ever. Through.

DE PROFUNDIS. PSALM CXXIX.†

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine: * Domine, exaudi vocem meam.

Fiant aures tuæ intendentes * in vocem deprecationis meæ.

Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine: * Domine, quis sustinebit?

Quia apud te propitiatio est: * et propter legem tuam sustinui te, Domino.

Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus: * speravit anima mea in Domine.

A custodia matutina usque ad noctem * speret Israel in Domino.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.

Let Thine ears be attentive: to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou, O Lord, shalt mark our iniquities: O Lord, who can abide it?

For with Thee there is mercy; and by reason of Thy law I have waited on Thee, O Lord.

My soul hath waited on His word: my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch even unto night: let Israel hope in the Lord.

† Indulgence of 100 days to all the faithful who say the *De profundis* and *Requiem æternam* at the first hour after the evening Angelus.

Quia apud Domi-
num misericordia, * et
copiosa apud eum re-
demptio.

Et ipse redimet Is-
rael * ex omnibus ini-
quitatibus ejus.

Requiem æternam *
dona eis, Domine.

Et lux perpetua
luceat eis.

Requiescant in pace.

Amen.

For with the Lord
there is mercy: and
with Him is plenteous
redemption.

And He shall re-
deem Israel: from all
his iniquities.

Eternal rest give to
them, O Lord;

And let perpetual
light shine upon them.

May they rest in
peace.

Amen.

End at pleasure with the following :

V. Domine, exaudi
orationem meam,

R. Et clamor meus
ad te veniat.

Oremus.

Fidelium Deus om-
nium conditor et re-
demptor, animabus
famulorum famula-
rumque tuarum remis-
sionem cunctorum tri-

V. Lord, hear my
prayer.

R. And let my cry
come unto Thee.

Let us pray.

O God, the Creator
and Redeemer of all
the faithful: grant to
the souls of Thy ser-
vants departed the re-
mission of all their

bue peccatorum; ut sins, that by our de-
 indulgentiam, quam voutsupplicationsthey
 semper optaverunt, may obtain that par-
 piis supplicationibus don which they have
 consequantur. Qui vi- always desired. Who
 vis et regnas in sæcula livest and reignest
 sæculorum. world without end.

R. Amen.

Amen.

V. Requiem æter- V. Eternal rest give
 nam dona eis, Domine, unto them, O Lord,

R. Et lux perpetua R. And let perpetual
 luceat eis. light shine upon them.

V. Requiescant in V. May they rest in
 pace. peace.

R. Amen.

R. Amen.

MISERERE. PSALM L.

Miserere mei Deus : Have mercy on me,
 * secundum magnam O God, according to
 misericordiam tuam. Thy great mercy.

Et secundum mul- And according to
 titudinem miseration- the multitude of Thy
 um tuarum : * dele tender mercies, blot
 iniquitatem meam. out mine iniquity.

Amplius lava me ab Wash me yet more

iniquitate mea : * et a peccato meo munda me.

Quoniam, iniquitatem meam ego cognosco : * et peccatum meum contra me est semper.

Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci : * ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis, et vincas cum judicaris.

Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum : * et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.

Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti : * incerta et occulta sapientiæ tuæ manifestasti mihi.

Asperges me hyssopo, et mundabor : * lavabis me, et super

from mine iniquity : and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know mine iniquity : and my sin is always before me.

To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee : that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words, and mayest overcome when Thou art judged.

For behold I was conceived in iniquities : and in sins did my mother conceive me.

For behold Thou hast loved truth : the uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast made manifest to me.

Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed :

nivem dealbabor.

Thou shalt wash me,
and I shall be made
whiter than snow.

Auditui meo dabis
gaudium et lætitiā: *
et exultabunt ossa hu-
miliata.

To my hearing Thou
shalt give joy and glad-
ness; and the bones
that have been hum-
bled shall rejoice.

Averte faciam tuam
a peccatis meis: * et
omnes iniquitates me-
as dele.

Turn away Thy face
from my sins, and blot
out all mine iniquities.

Cor mundum crea
in me, Deus: * et spi-
ritum rectum innova
in visceribus meis.

Create a clean heart
in me, O God: and
renew a right spirit
within my bowels.

Ne projicias me a
facie tua: * et Spi-
ritum sanctum tuum
ne auferas a me.

Cast me not away
from Thy face: and
take not Thy Holy
Spirit from me.

Redde mihi lætitiā
salutaris tui: * et spi-
ritu principali confir-
ma me.

Restore unto me the
joy of Thy salvation,
and strengthen me
with a perfect spirit.

Docebo iniquos vias
tuas: * et impii ad te
convertentur.

I will teach the un-
just Thy ways; and
the wicked shall be
converted to Thee.

Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meæ: * et exaltabit lingua mea justitiam tuam.

Domine, labia mea aperies: * et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.

Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium, dedissem utique: * holocaustis non delectaberis.

Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus: * cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus non despicies.

Benigne fac, Domine, in bona voluntate tua Sion: * ut ædificentur muri Jerusalem.

Tunc acceptabis sacrificium justitiæ, oblationes, et holocausta:

Deliver me from blood, O God, Thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall extol Thy justice.

O Lord, Thou wilt open my lips: and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.

For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it: with burnt offerings Thou wilt not be delighted.

A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Deal favourably, O Lord, in Thy good will with Sion, that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up.

Then shalt Thou accept the sacrifice of justice, oblations, and

* tunc imponent su- whole burnt offerings :
 per altare tuum vitu- then shall they lay
 los. calves upon Thine
 altar.

Requiem, &c.

Eternal rest, &c.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAD.

For Brethren, Relations, and Benefactors.

O God, the giver of pardon, and lover of the salvation of mankind, we beseech Thy clemency in behalf of our brethren, relations, and benefactors, who have departed this life : that the blessed Mary ever Virgin, and all Thy saints interceding for them, they may come to the fellowship of eternal happiness. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

For a Man deceased.

Hear, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our prayers which we humbly address to Thy mercy, that the soul of Thy servant N., which Thou hast called out of this world, may be received into the region of light and peace, and be numbered amongst the blessed. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

For a Woman deceased.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, according to Thy great goodness, to show mercy to the soul of Thy servant N., that, being now delivered from the corruptions of this mortal life, she may be received into the inheritance of eternal bliss. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

For one lately deceased.

Absolve, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant N., that, being dead to the world, he may live to Thee: and whatever he hath committed in this life through human frailty, do Thou of Thy most merciful goodness forgive. Through our Lord, &c.

On the Anniversary Day.

O Lord, the God of mercy and pardon, grant to the soul of Thy servant N., whose anniversary we commemorate, the seat of refreshment, the happiness of rest, and the brightness of light. Through our Lord, &c.

HEROIC ACT OF CHARITY TOWARDS THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

The heroic act of charity is an offering, or voluntary gift, which we make of all our personal satisfactory works during our life, and of the suffrages which will be applied to us after our death, and which we place in the hands of the Blessed Virgin, that this tender Mother may distribute them according to her will, to those souls in purgatory whom she wishes to deliver from their pains. What we give by this act is the special and personal fruit which we derive from this satisfaction and suffrages. This gift does not prevent us from praying for ourselves, our relatives, or performing our practices of piety, etc. By this gift we give, or apply, only the satisfactory fruit of our works. The fruits of merit, of propitiation, and of impetration still remain to us, and cannot be communicated to others.

We may well believe that our charity

for the dead, far from being hurtful to us, will be advantageous. For merit is on account of charity, and doubtless we are more charitable when, instead of keeping our good for ourselves, we sacrifice it for the relief of our afflicted brethren. There is little virtue in giving of our abundance to the poor; there is much in giving of our necessity. We may also count on the special protection of the just whose sufferings we have relieved, or the hour of whose deliverance we have hastened. We never lose anything when we lose it for God, and for those whom He loves truly and tenderly. All that we give through charity to the souls of the departed, says St. Ambrose, changes into grace for us, and after our death we will find the merit a hundred-fold.

The heroic act of charity has been enriched with the most precious favours.

The faithful who have performed it may gain the plenary indulgence applicable only to the souls in purgatory, every time that they receive communion,

visiting on that day a church or public chapel, and there praying for the intentions of his Holiness. They will also gain a plenary indulgence every Monday, by hearing Mass for the relief of these souls, and making the visit to the church, and saying the prayer as above. They may finally apply to the souls in purgatory all the indulgences which are not applicable to them by former concessions, and which have been subsequently accorded. (Pius IX., Sept., 1852.)

There is no prescribed form in making this act; it suffices to make it from the heart. The following form can be adopted:

O Mary, Mother of Mercy, I place in thy hand, in behalf of the holy souls in purgatory, all my satisfactory works during my life, and the suffrages which may be applied to me after my death, and only reserve for myself the compassion of thy Maternal Heart.

Recite the *De profundis*.

